

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Militant' launches international sales campaign  
— PAGE 5

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Women's rights fight helps answer gov't attacks

Thousands of people who gather for the national Rally for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C., April 9 are standing up to defend abortion rights and keep the clinics open; to maintain affirmative action; to oppose violence against women; and to say no to the scapegoating of young women, single mothers, or anyone else who receives government aid and is being

### EDITORIAL

blamed for the deepening economic crisis. These actions are an important part of gathering the forces and experience necessary to confront the broader assaults the government and the employing class are planning against women's rights, unions, and the social wage.

Democrats and Republicans increasingly sound the theme of "sacrifice" — to

Continued on Page 14

## INS cops seize workers in NJ airport raid

BY KATHIE FITZGERALD

NEWARK, New Jersey — At close to midnight March 30, about three dozen agents from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Customs Service, and the Federal Aviation Administration rounded up 130 contract workers as they gathered to begin their jobs cleaning the interiors of Continental planes at Newark International Airport.

Claiming the workers were "illegal aliens," the immigration cops took all 130 to a "holding pen" in a building called the Hemisphere Center near the airport. According to a security guard there, some of the workers were released and others were quickly moved to another facility. The *New York Times* reported that 112 people were eventually arrested and served with orders telling them to show cause why they should not be deported. Local papers in New Jersey gave almost no coverage of the government's attack on immigrant workers.

The cleaners picked up in the sweep came from a variety of countries. The *Times* reported that they were from Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, Brazil, Honduras, Colombia, Portugal, and Spain. Continental ramp workers interviewed by the *Militant* said they thought most of those arrested were Portuguese and Brazilian. The workers were employed by Lisbon Cleaners, a Newark company.

Arthur Helton, director of migration programs at the Open Society Institute in New York, told the *Times* that the number of people arrested in the raid was large compared to others in this area. Airline workers could remember no other raid of such scope.

While many Continental ramp workers interviewed by the *Militant* did not know the details of the raid, word of it was beginning to get around. The sentiment of most was summed up by a young worker

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## NY labor, youth protest squeeze on social gains

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — "We are trying to take our future into our own hands," said Ghubemi Okotie-uro, vice president of the Student Government Association at Medgar Evers College. Okotie-uro was part of a spirited crowd of 5,000 people who marched from City Hall to Wall Street April 4, protesting proposed cuts in public education, social services, and jobs.

Chanting "They say cut back, we say fight back!" the demonstrators tied up a section of Broadway, one of the main thoroughfares in Manhattan. The demonstrators, who continued the protest in the pouring rain, planned their march to coincide with the 27th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sponsored by Local 1199 of the National Health and Human Service Employees Union and the City University of New York Coalition Against the Budget Cuts, the rally also received the support of Transport Workers Union Local 100, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) District 37, and several other unions.

Students from Medgar Evers College, City College, Brooklyn College, and other schools were on hand. Many of the protesters were immigrants from Nigeria, China, the Dominican Republic, St. Vincent, and Jamaica.

"A large number of people are affected by [New York governor George] Pataki's cuts," said Stanley Hill, president of AFSCME District Council 37. Many of the protesters carried union signs. "We're making progress in turning Pataki around," he said. In recent weeks the Republican governor has been having more problems pushing through some of his



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Students joined unionists at April 4 march in Manhattan opposing cuts in jobs, education, and social services. Protests are having impact on city and state lawmakers.

proposed cuts. Protests by students, government employees, and working people who benefit from city and state social programs are putting mounting pressure on New York's lawmakers.

"This budget crisis was not created by students," said Okotie-uro. "Why should they tax workers? Most of us work. How am I going to be able to survive and take care of my family?"

Many demonstrators said they were out on the streets to speak out against already

difficult conditions for working people that will get worse if proposed government cutbacks go through.

"I work full-time and go to school full-time," said Judith Espinal, a student at City College. "The rich are the ones getting the benefits. Why do we have to pay?" Espinal, a worker from the Dominican Republic, was among a number of participants at the rally who also wanted to voice their opposition to anti-immigrant

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### CUBA and the 'Special Period'

How workers use their socialist revolution to fight effects of international crisis of capitalism

Hear:

**Mary-Alice Waters**

Editor of *New International* and *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*

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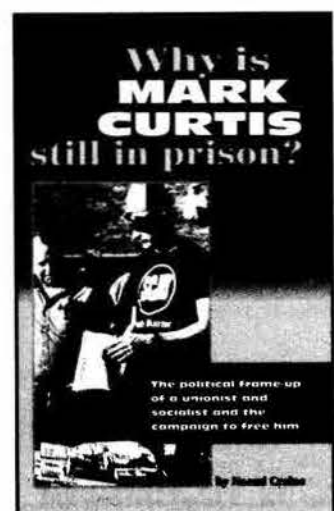
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## Bank crisis hits Venezuela

A string of bank collapses in Venezuela is triggering a sharp economic and political crisis there. The government pumped \$7.5 billion into the banking sector last year in an unsuccessful attempt to stem the failures, the bailout being equivalent to 13 percent of the nation's total 1994 economic output. In turn, inflation doubled to 71 percent. Although 100 indictments have been issued so far by the Venezuelan government in connection with the bank failures, no banker is on trial and none are in jail.

Rafael Caldera, the president of Venezuela, has gone through two finance ministers, two central bank presidents, three bank superintendents, three development ministers, four planning ministers, and eight economic plans in his first 14 months in office.

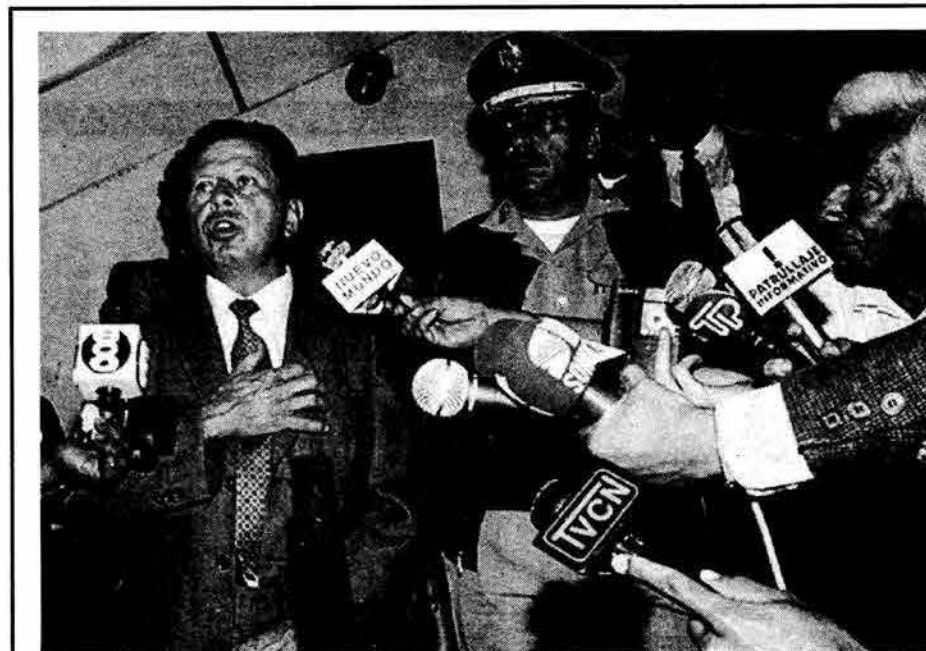
Daily trading on the Caracas stock market is only one-tenth of its level a year ago. U.S. and European investors are steering clear of Venezuela outside of oil investments.

## Banana war threatens

Belize prime minister Manuel Esquivel asked Washington March 27 to drop threatened sanctions against the European Union (EU) over banana quotas. Higher priced Caribbean bananas are protected in the EU market through import preferences and tariffs. Pointing to the recent banana workers' strikes in St. Lucia, Esquivel warned that political turmoil is likely if Caribbean countries face a significant reduction of their share of the European market. Pressure is being brought to bear on U.S. lawmakers by Chiquita to act against the EU. The company contends enormous harm is being done to their business by the EU's actions. Carl Lindner, owner of Chiquita, is a large contributor to the campaigns of both Democratic and Republican Party politicians.

## Africa to pay more for food

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade will raise world agricultural trade by 9 percent, according to a report by the Food and Agriculture Organization, a United Nations-sponsored institution. North American farm exports are projected to rise from \$15 billion to \$22 billion by the year 2000. Other large capitalist producers like Australia and New Zealand are also expected to benefit.



Former CIA employee and Guatemalan colonel Julio Roberto Alpírez (left) after revelations linked him to murders of U.S.-born Michael Devine and guerrilla leader Efraín Bámaca. The U.S.-backed military is responsible for most of the 150,000 killings in Guatemala in past 30 years. The White House was forced to admit that CIA continues to provide funds for Guatemala's military.

The report estimates Africa's annual food bill will rise from \$8.4 billion in 1989 to \$14 billion by the year 2000. At the same time, capitalist governments are expected to reduce the already scant "preferential" access to markets for countries with large food imports. Under the agreement, Western European countries are obliged to open their markets and could see an annual food cost increase of \$10 billion to \$15 billion by the year 2000.

**Thousands flee Burundi**  
An estimated 20,000 Rwandan refugees began an exodus from Burundi, heading to Tanzania March 31, after a dozen people were killed in a refugee camp on Burundi's northern border. At about the same time a slaughter by army-backed militiamen that left more than 150 dead in Burundi's capital, Bujumbura, also prompted

a wave of Burundians to flee to Zaire.

The paramilitary groups, associated with the country's military leaders, were trying to drive Hutu families from two of the few remaining mixed neighborhoods in the capital. More than 1 million Rwandans left their country last year after the Paris-backed dictatorship organized the slaughter of some 500,000 people before it was overthrown. More than 200,000 Rwandans fled to Burundi.

## U.S. warship sails to China

The *USS Bunker Hill* entered the Chinese port in Qingdao recently to the tune of *The Star Spangled Banner* and rows of Chinese soldiers waving signal flags from the decks of destroyers. It was the first U.S. warship to visit China since Beijing massacred hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators at Tienanmen Square in 1989. The vessel was only the third U.S. warship to enter a Chinese port since the revolution in 1949.

Washington cooled military relations with China after the killing of pro-democracy demonstrators provoked international outrage. Talks on military cooperation resumed last fall after a visit by U.S. defense secretary William Perry.

## Turmoil halts gas sale in Russia

Kleinwort Benson, a United Kingdom investment bank advising Russia on the sale of 9 percent of Gazprom, froze its plan to offer shares to institutional investors. Gazprom is Russia's largest source of hard currency, and the world's biggest hydrocarbon producer, controlling 24 percent of the world's gas reserves. The investment firm decided to postpone sale to pension funds and the like until political and economic turmoil in Russia

subsidies. Instead Kleinwort Benson will target international oil, gas, and chemical companies to invest in Gazprom.

The Gazprom offering is one of many from "emerging markets" that have been postponed since the financial crisis in Mexico began in December. The Russian stock market has undergone a 70 percent decline since last September.

## Iraq rejects embargo plan

Iraq spurned a plan put forward by Washington and London to modify sanctions so that the country could sell \$2 billion of oil and use the proceeds for humanitarian purposes. Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz condemned the proposal as a move by the Clinton administration to prolong the sanctions. He said the modifications would allow too little money to be available and interfered with the sovereignty of Iraq.

Many capitalist countries want to resume trade with Iraq and tap into the wealth of its oilfields. As a result, imperialist powers that fought against Iraq in the Gulf war are showing signs of drifting away from the embargo.

## New sales tax to pay off bankers

To replenish its coffers and help pay off debts to investors and bankers following a \$1.7 billion investment debacle, Orange County supervisors are proposing a 10-year-long .5 percent sales tax increase. The move would bring sales taxes, one of the most regressive forms of levy, to 8.25 percent in Orange County.

County supervisors plan to put the tax increase proposal, known as Measure R, on the June 27 ballot. The vote in favor of putting the question on the ballot was 5 to 0. County officials are confident that the measure will pass having garnered the support of some union leaders. "We have all taken a dose of realism," supervisor Mariañ Bergeson commented. This tax increase would be in addition to other measures, such as the elimination of county jobs and public services.

## Judge rules on gays in military

A federal judge struck down Washington's policy against gays in the military March 30, saying it violated the First and Fifth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Although the ruling bars the discharge of only the six service members who brought the lawsuit, it can influence other challenges.

"Congress may not enact discriminatory legislation because it desires to insulate heterosexual service members from statements that might excite their prejudice," Eugene Nickerson ruled in Federal District Court in Brooklyn, New York.

The Justice Department indicated it would appeal the decision. The Clinton administration policy, known as "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue," states that declaring one's homosexuality implies intent to commit homosexual acts and is therefore grounds for discharge.

— DAMON TINNON

## THE MILITANT

### Defend Immigrant Workers!

As the capitalist class around the world drives to slash jobs, wages, and social entitlements, they are stepping up scapegoating and attacks on the rights of immigrant workers from the United States to Germany. 'Militant' correspondents cover growing actions protesting anti-immigrant measures and the discussion of how to unite workers of all nationalities.



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# ANC rejects perpetual coalition setup

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Delegates to the African National Congress national constitutional conference unanimously rejected calls to extend the coalition government arrangement in South Africa beyond 1999. Under the interim constitution, the Government of National Unity incorporates into the Cabinet all parties that received more than 5 percent of the vote in elections held last April. The National Party (NP), led by South African deputy-president F.W. de Klerk, has demanded that the coalition setup be extended.

The initial agreement to establish this type of government and an interim constitution, said ANC deputy-president Thabo Mbeki, "were contrived elements of transition necessary to end the system of white minority domination and to facilitate the transfer of important elements of political power from the hands of the oppressor white minority regime to those of the democratic majority."

"At no stage were these elements of transition conceived as elements of permanence," Mbeki told the ANC delegates gathered near Johannesburg March 31-April 2. While these agreements were necessary, he continued, "What we do not want to perpetuate is a forced coalition which denies the majority political constituency the right to freely decide how to pursue the interest of the democratic majority."

Provisions for sharing executive responsibility are a central component of the National Party's submissions to the Constitutional Assembly, which has until June 1996 to draft South Africa's constitution. NP executive director Fanus Schoeman said majority rule was "most undesirable."

ANC delegates also affirmed the party's stance that substantial authority in a central government should not be whittled away to provincial legislatures. The Inkatha Freedom Party of Mangosuthu Buthelezi has been insistent in its demands for provincial autonomy.

"Delegates backed a stance that the country should not be fragmented," said ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa, who is also president of the Constitutional Assembly. "We believe that our proposals really should finally resolve this debate between federalism and unitarism so that our country is not fragmented in any way and provinces cannot set up as fiefdoms."

## Local government polls November 1

A major stepping stone for South Africa's unfolding democratic revolution will be local government elections, now scheduled for November 1 of this year. Voters will elect town and municipal councils for the first time on the basis of majority rule, replacing the interim bodies that have been seated since the opening of 1995.

Addressing a summit on the elections March 14, South African president Nelson Mandela said, "The historic task of building democracy in our country is half done...the absence of legitimate local government is the most serious obstacle to socio-economic change and specifically to any systematic implementation of the RDP [Reconstruction and Development Program]."

So far, only about 5 percent of South Africans eligible to vote have registered for the poll, and the effort is particularly weak in rural areas. Registration is currently scheduled to close on April 28.



Left to right: F.W. de Klerk of National Party, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki of African National Congress at Mandela's May 1994 presidential inauguration.

Mandela urged "a collective national effort" to register voters. "Every organization or person with influence in their community should muster their resources and go out into the communities, in the cities, towns, and villages, from the suburbs to the farms. Teachers, religious and traditional leaders, and other community leaders all have a special role to play in ensuring that every citizen is able to exercise their democratic right."

## 1995 budget

South African finance minister Chris Liebenberg presented a proposed budget to the national assembly March 14. Among its features are an increase in spending on social services, aimed primarily at reducing the vast gulf separating the living conditions of blacks from that of whites—a smoldering legacy of apartheid rule. Social spending is projected to rise from 52.8 percent to 57.4 percent of the national budget. The housing budget is to more than double, to \$800

million. Education spending is to be increased, targeting a national upgrade of primary and secondary schools in black communities. Similarly, health services are to receive an increase aimed especially at primary health services in rural areas.

The budget was designed to entice some foreign capital investment in the country by reducing the government deficit while scrapping a non-resident shareholder tax, currently imposed on all dividends sent abroad, and scrapping tariffs on imported consumer commodities.

The proposal would abolish the higher tax imposed on married women under apartheid. The government's proposal raises the top income tax rate 2 percent, to 45 percent. This levy is imposed on everyone with yearly incomes of more than 80,000 rand—about \$22,000. The income tax burden on the lowest-income workers would remain the same, except for hiking cigarette and liquor taxes. Some \$695 million would be set aside to narrow the wage gap between white and black

public service workers. Corporate taxes would be undisturbed.

All political parties with representatives in the national assembly generally welcomed the budget. The National Party, Democratic Party, and Freedom Front said they opposed the tax increase on higher incomes.

The ANC said the budget "achieved a significant degree of reprioritization toward the goals of the RDP." It called for "a wider debate on the defense budget and how it relates to the new priorities."

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) also said it supported the basic proposal. But a March 30 press release said the union federation "has rejected the 1995-96 defense budget in its entirety. We do not believe that it is in line with the priorities agreed to by the new government. Contrary to expectations that military spending would be drastically scaled down, amounts allocated to Defense are almost equivalent to that of the 1994-95 allocation. COSATU would like to see an urgent process of scaling down, which will result in defense spending being cut by up to 50 percent in the near future."

In a March 21 *Wall Street Journal* article, John Koppisch, former assistant editor of the Johannesburg *Financial Mail*, argued that "the expected flood of foreign investment [into South Africa] has turned out to be only a trickle." He complained that high taxes and the state of labor relations were among the chief factors responsible. Koppisch labeled Mandela "an indecisive leader."

"Instead of New Zealand-style deregulation of the labor market, the ANC is going the other way. A new bill would make it even easier for unions to strike and would undermine management."

## Abolishing inequality in industry

Workers continue to press for abolition of apartheid-era discrimination throughout South African industry. Some gains have been registered on this front.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa and two other unions reached an agreement with employers' federations

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# Winnie Mandela is removed from Cabinet

BY GREG ROSENBERG

South African president Nelson Mandela removed Winnie Mandela from her position as deputy-minister of arts and culture March 27. She remains a member of Parliament as well as president of the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL).

"This decision has been taken both in the interests of good governance and to ensure the highest standards of discipline among leading officials in the Government of National Unity," said Nelson Mandela, who is also president of the African National Congress, at a Cape Town press conference. "I hope that this action will help the former deputy-minister to review, and to seek to improve on, her own conduct in positions of responsibility so as to enable her to make the positive contribution to society which her talents would enable her."

In response to a reporter's question the South African president added, "I am not going into any details, but I'm concerned that the Government of National Unity should function effectively, and that every member of that government should make a constructive contribution to the problems that we address."

The executive action followed Winnie Mandela's defiance of presidential orders not to leave South Africa to attend a film festival in Burkina Faso in February. Corruption and bribery allegations have also been leveled against her.

"Is she not creating a situation in which all others can do what they like and the president would have been placed in an invidious position to discipline them because he had failed to discipline a member of the ANC?" asked veteran ANC leader Govan Mbeki, in an April 1 address to ANC members in King William's Town.

In February, 11 members of the ANCWL national executive committee resigned over what they called undemo-

cratic leadership of the organization under Winnie Mandela. Among those resigning was Adelaide Tambo, Women's League treasurer-general.

At a meeting on April 2, the ANC and Women's League national executive committees announced the formation of a commission to investigate problems in the ANCWL.

The 11 members of the women's league who had earlier resigned attended this gathering. Following the investigation, the ANCWL is to hold a national conference.

Winnie Mandela has increasingly cast herself a champion of the worst-off sections of South Africa's black population, and at the same time as a critic of the course of the ANC leadership in the Government of National Unity. She has demagogically accused ANC leaders of practicing "overindulgence" in reconciliation at the expense of the black majority. Her political course has diverged from that of the nonracial revolutionary democratic perspective advanced by the ANC.

On March 3, addressing corruption allegations, Winnie Mandela declared there to be "broader diabolical objectives" at work.

"The fight against those who are perceived to be pillars of ANC mass support has now become obvious and transparent," she said in a statement through her lawyer. "Suffice to say that in the end I shall triumph and my people will be the beneficiaries."

Forty police raided Winnie Mandela's home March 1 while she was out of the country, ostensibly to search for evidence in the corruption investigation. On March 22, a Supreme Court judge ruled that there had been no justification for issuing a search warrant. The ANC welcomed the ruling, stating that "We hope that the police will take note of the fact that South Africa is no longer a police state where

basic democratic rights of citizens could be trampled upon without recourse to justice."

The South African president's termination of Winnie Mandela's Cabinet post came after the matter of the search warrant had been settled. It met with support from the ANC and other organizations in the democratic movement, including the ANC Women's League, ANC Youth League, Congress of South African Trade Unions, South African Communist Party, and South African National Civics Organization. A joint statement by the ANC-led alliance in Gauteng province said that no one was "above the basic norms of discipline."

One day prior to her dismissal, Winnie Mandela appeared at a rally of 2,000 people, mostly squatters, in Philippi near Cape Town. She was joined on-stage by ANC members of Parliament Peter Mokaba and Tony Yengeni, and announced she was suing Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi and police commissioner George Fivaz for the police raid.

Harry Gwala, an ANC leader in KwaZulu-Natal province who has been one of Winnie Mandela's defenders, predicted "there will definitely be some anger. Winnie Mandela is one of those who expresses the feelings of people on the ground." Gwala claimed that some ANC members "are already crying foul that she has been singled out for victimization. People are asking who is next."

Winnie Mandela's political course first drew public rebuke from ANC leaders in 1986, when she declared "with our necklaces and boxes of matches we shall liberate this country." In 1991 she was tried and convicted of kidnapping and assault for a 1988 case in Soweto. Her six-year sentence was suspended. Nelson and Winnie Mandela announced their separation in April 1992.

## New International no. 5

The Coming Revolution in South Africa  
by Jack Barnes

The social character and roots of apartheid in South African capitalism and the tasks of the toilers in dismantling the legacy of social and economic inequality. Only among the most committed cadres of this ANC-led struggle, Barnes writes, can the working class begin forging a communist leadership. \$9



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# Movie tells inspiring story of framed-up worker

"From behind prison walls" is a regular column written by framed-up union and political activist Mark Curtis. Printed below is a movie review Curtis wrote for the June 23, 1990, issue of the *Militant*. The movie, *Break of Dawn*, chronicled the life of Pedro González who died March 23, 1995, at the age of 99.

FORT MADISON, Iowa — *Break of Dawn*, a film about the life of Pedro González, was shown on Iowa Public Television last month while I was incarcerated at the state prison in Anamosa.

I saw the movie together with other in-



Mark Curtis

mates, including a young Mexican who used to work at the same meatpacking plant in Des Moines as I did. My friend's first comment was, "That movie was exactly like what happened to you, Marcos."

*Break of Dawn* is an inspiring story about working people who stand up to fight against injustice and win.

González was born and raised in the northern Mexican state of Chihuahua. He began working as a telegraph operator for the railroad as a young man. But something bigger than the railroad changed his life forever. During the Mexican revolution that began in 1910 millions of people, mostly peasants, fought for the right to the land they worked and to defend their country's sovereignty against the United States.

González joined Francisco "Pancho" Villa's revolutionary army and became Villa's personal telegrapher. He was nearly executed after his capture by those fighting against Villa. As he stood on the firing line, a group of young women dashed out between the rifles of the firing squad and González. They delayed the

shooting long enough for a call to be made to the governor, who halted the execution.

Cuca Ochoa, a school teacher, organized the rescue. At a party some years later González met Ochoa and her daughter María Salcido, who was among the young women who had saved his life. Three months later González and Salcido were married in El Paso, Texas.

The couple moved to Los Angeles in the 1920s. *Break of Dawn* begins the story here. Living with relatives, González got a job working as a longshoreman on the docks in Wilmington, California.

While loading and unloading ships, González sang ballads he had written. Co-workers recognized his talent and urged him to try his luck at the local radio station, so he went for auditions. "In Spanish? No, we can't use it," the station manager told González.

Refusing to accept this rejection, González convinced the manager to hire him to read ads in Spanish. One day he took a chance and sang a song in Spanish on the air. He was fired, but calls from many people in the Mexican community who wanted to hear more of his music swamped the station.

He was rehired and began to broadcast his own program called "Los Madrugadores" (The Early Risers) between 4:00 and 6:00 in the morning. The audience was *mexicanos* and *Chicanos* getting ready to go to work in the fields and factories. His style and beautiful music made the program very popular.

## Fight-back during Great Depression

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, tens of millions of workers lost their jobs, and millions of farmers lost their land. Cuts in wages, longer hours, and worse conditions faced those who continued to work. This situation forced working people to fight back. Unions were organized. Strikes were called. Unemployed leagues were set up. And the government and employers attempted to break these struggles by using the police, courts, and National Guard.

Racist campaigns scapegoating immigrant workers were launched to keep working people divided. Nearly 500,000

Mexican workers were picked up and deported by the U.S. government.

In Los Angeles, Kyle Mitchell, the district attorney, called for more deportations and fanned racial hatred by blaming Spanish-speaking workers for unemployment and "stealing American jobs." González knew Mitchell. He had run campaign advertisements on his program for the district attorney. Mitchell had been elected by the "big turn out from the East Side," which still is predominantly Mexican and Chicano.

When González spoke out against deportations, he quickly became an enemy of Mitchell. The film shows unions with many immigrant members rallying against deportations and one rally being raided by police. González called the raids racist. "This is our home, we have a right to be here," he said.

## The frame-up against González

This angered the district attorney, who ordered his stooge Héctor Rodríguez to get González out of the way. After arresting him several times on minor charges that were later dropped, the cops cooked up a serious frame-up against González. A young woman who had been raped by another man was bullied by police into fingering him.

An all-white jury found González guilty. He was sentenced to 50 years in California's San Quentin prison. All his appeals were denied. Two years later the young woman admitted that González had not committed the crime and that the police had pressured her to make the accusation. But the judge refused to release him, claiming that the time limit for appeals had passed.

Despite brutal treatment in jail, time in solitary confinement in the "hole," and offers to release him if he admitted the crime, González refused to be broken. The film covers little of his time in jail. But those who see it will not be surprised to hear that he was nicknamed "The Defender" by other prisoners because he stood up for their rights. He organized 5,000 prisoners in the first hunger strike ever at San Quentin. It was successful and the hated prison director was replaced.

María Salcido took over her husband's air time at the radio station. She, along with many of his friends and supporters, launched the Pedro González Defense

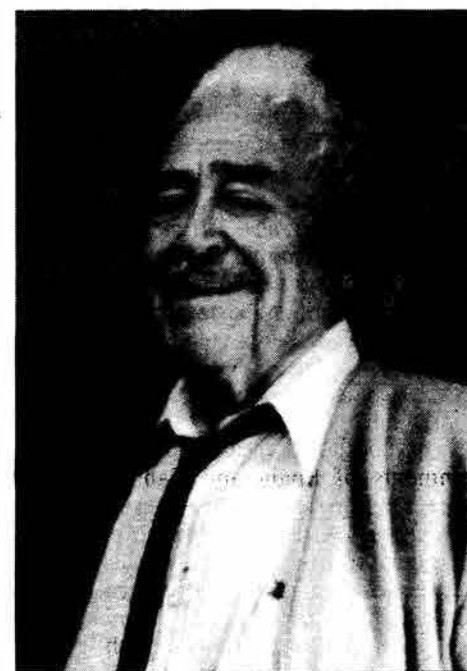
Committee, which spread throughout the Southwest. The movie shows her speaking to people about the frame-up, collecting signatures, and raising funds. The defense committee collected 300,000 signatures on a petition to the governor of California calling for González's release. Two ex-presidents of Mexico and the Mexican counsel to the United States also endorsed the efforts of this international campaign.

"Looks like you and him are in the same boat, Mark," said one of my cellmates, who was also watching the movie.

The government was finally forced to release González after he served six years in prison. Although he had "papers" allowing him to live in the United States, he was deported, a practice that is still common today. In 1972 González and Salcido were permitted to return to the United States.

Although the U.S. government granted González citizenship, they remain committed to maintaining his frame-up. In 1985 his last appeal for a formal pardon was denied on the excuse that the woman who had falsely accused him recanted too late and only in the presence of the Mexican counsel.

*Break of Dawn* is a movie that belongs to working people everywhere and deserves to be seen.



Pedro González in 1985

## Curtis sends solidarity to jailed miner

Reprinted below is a solidarity message from Mark Curtis to framed-up gold miner Roger Warren. Warren was falsely accused and convicted in the deaths of nine replacement workers during a strike at the Giant gold mine in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. He is serving a life sentence in prison.

My brother Roger,

Your convictions on murder charges and sentence to life in prison is a capital crime—not just against you, but against the CAW [Canadian Auto Workers] and the working class the world over.

This is capitalist "justice." The gold bosses framed you, they judged you, and now they will jail you and try to crush you. They plan to drive ahead to do the same to Al Sheary and Tim Bettger. [Miners who also face frame-up charges.]

Gold boss Peggy Witte's lust for gold killed and maimed miners who dug it out of the earth. When your union brothers launched a strike she sent scabs underground to break it. The explosion at Royal Oak and its blood is on her hands.

By railroad you, coercing a fake confession out of you, her cops and her chief justice crucified you and hope to intimidate all miners from standing up for their rights.

That's why the labor movement must now defend you and fight for your release. Your freedom is a life and death question for the working class.

I know how you will feel when they put you in your cell and slam that door behind you. But don't despair. "Illegitimus non carborundum est" — don't let the bastards get you down — is how you put it to me last summer. You are not alone or forgotten. Your brothers and sisters will be with you. Many of them haven't even heard of you yet, but coal miners in South Africa,

sugarcane cutters in Cuba, peasants in the Philippines, Italian auto workers, and California lettuce pickers will join the fight for your release as they awaken to the fact that in their own struggles their enemies are all the Peggy Wittes of the world and their allies are all the Roger Warrens of the world.

Though you'll be separated from co-workers and family, and denied freedom, they will not drive you out of the labor movement. Instead of being used by the bosses as an example to intimidate those who dare to struggle, you are an example and inspiration to fighters as one who cannot be broken by those who lust for gold and will commit any crime to get it.

Stay strong.  
Your brother,  
Mark Curtis



Roger Warren

## Curtis supporters chart campaign to reach out with pamphlet on his case

BY JOHN COX

DES MOINES, Iowa — At a recent meeting here called by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee (MCDC), supporters of the framed-up unionist discussed plans to fight for his freedom by distributing widely a new pamphlet about his case entitled, *Why is Mark Curtis Still in Prison?*

"By reaching out with this pamphlet to co-workers, students, fellow political activists, and others we will not only find new support but we will be laying the groundwork for the next big push of the defense committee — to press Iowa officials to release Mark from lockup and grant him parole," John Studer, chairperson of the defense committee, told those assembled.

"Using this pamphlet aggressively and imaginatively should fit quite naturally with whatever political activities supporters of Curtis are involved in," added Studer. In Minneapolis, supporters of Curtis's fight have taken a goal of selling 65 copies of the new pamphlet in English and Spanish over the next two months of political activity.

Curtis is a union and political activist who was framed up and convicted in 1988 on charges of rape and burglary. Curtis and his supporters have waged a fight for seven years to expose the frame-up and win his freedom, a fight that has won support from political activists and supporters of democratic rights internationally.

"It is increasingly clear to many who follow this case that Mark is getting a raw

deal, from the prison authorities as well as from the parole board," Studer said. He then pointed out that the continuing efforts to wear Curtis down and break his morale stem from the fact that Curtis has refused to buckle — he continues to lead the fight against his frame-up and remains a political person behind the prison walls. Instead of intimidating others from political activity, Curtis's response to the attacks against him have inspired many to step forward.

The recently concluded campaign to win new endorsers for his fight around the world showed the possibilities that exist today to wage a political struggle for his release, Studer emphasized. More than 100 new endorsers were won, from Cuba to South Africa, from New Zealand to Belgium, and across the United States. Strikers at Firestone in Des Moines, rail workers in Washington, D.C., high school students in Salt Lake City, Utah, and dozens of unionists and political activists signed up to show their support for his fight.

Supporters of the Mark Curtis defense effort are looking forward to several upcoming political events to distribute the new pamphlet, including the April 9 march on Washington for women's rights; regional meetings of affiliates of the National Network on Cuba; demonstrations in support of Irish political prisoners; and upcoming conventions of the NAACP, the United Auto Workers union, the National Lawyers Guild, and other groups.

To get involved, contact: MCDC, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa, 50311.





# international campaign to win new readers



Militant 2,950  
Perspectiva Mundial 675  
New International 1,200

## 2,950 subs to go in 10 weeks

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Just a few days into the international campaign to sell the socialist press, distributors from Canada to New Zealand have written in to report the interest they've found among workers and young people in discussing the political ideas in the *Militant*, the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the Marxist magazine *New International*.

Distributors in Canada sold 70 copies of the *Militant* and two subscriptions to striking rail workers and their supporters during the recent nine-day national rail strike. Another half dozen rail workers signed up for *Militant* distributors to get back to them about subscribing. Several subscriptions and copies of *New International* were sold at Militant Labor Forums on the strike in Vancouver and Montreal.

Rail workers bought the socialist paper after discussions on "the Irish struggle against British oppression, the Cuban revolution, the capitalist economic world depression, workers struggles in France, the United States, and Mexico," and a wide range of other questions, wrote Ned Dmytryshyn in Vancouver.

The conflict between the governments of Spain and Canada over fishing rights in the North Atlantic sparked some discussion. Brigitte Groulx in Toronto described meeting Portuguese-born strikers at Canadian National Railways (CN) who said the fish war "was a big-business and government show on both sides."

Leah Zaviar, a striking United Transportation Union member at CN in British Columbia signed up for an introductory *Militant* subscription after an hour-long dis-



Militant supporter Roger Annis, right, talks to striking workers in Montreal during recent national railroad strike in Canada.

cussion on the picket line with *Militant* supporters from Vancouver and Seattle. "The bosses have so much power by controlling the courts and government, but working people also have a lot of power if organized and led," Zaviar remarked after learning about the range of workers struggles covered in the *Militant*.

The experience during the rail strike gives *Militant* supporters in Canada "a good solid basis for building on as we enter the international circulation drive," concluded Dmytryshyn.

### At farm protest rally

"Supporters of the *Militant* from Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota kicked off the 10-week subscription campaign while participating in a rally of more than 2,000 small farmers and their supporters in Lincoln Township, Missouri," writes Angel Lariscy from Illinois.

Eighty-two single copies of the *Militant* were sold there along with three introductory subscriptions. Fifteen people bought copies of the Pathfinder pamphlet, *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s*. "A number of people were very interested in the *Militant*'s firsthand coverage from Mexico, particularly on the struggles of peasants in Chiapas," Lariscy said. Others wanted to read the articles on student protests against attacks on education and the socialist paper's coverage of the congressional debate on the 1995 farm bill.

"April 1, the beginning of the

international circulation campaign, was also Socialist Education Day here in Christchurch," writes Dean Hazlewood from New Zealand. The program included classes on defending the Cuban revolution and on the crisis of capitalism and the rightward shift in politics.

The day ended with a *Militant* Labor Forum on the struggle for Maori land rights. The Pathfinder bookstore was open between sessions. Sales included two copies of *New International* and a *Militant* subscription. One participant joined the Young Socialists.

### Initial reports come in

At the right is a chart of local goals. The initial overall goals for the drive have been adjusted based on the targets taken by local distributors around the world. Between April 1 and June 11, the aim will be to sell 2,950 *Militant* subscriptions, 675 *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions, and 1,200 copies of *New International*.

Each week during the drive the *Militant* will list where we stand as of noon, E.D.T. on Tuesday. In the United States, *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* totals are based on subscriptions received at the paper's business office. Outside the United States figures are based on reports from distributors received by letter, fax, or E-mail. We encourage distributors to get their subscriptions and sales reports to the *Militant* in time for next week's chart, along with notes on political discussions with new readers.

## Immigration raid at airport

Continued from front page sprinting to catch the employee bus. "I really don't know much about it," he said, "But I think it's a damn shame."

"Everybody has the right to a job," said Carol, a Black worker in her 40s. "At union airlines they start low but after awhile you can earn a living. There's no union at Continental. I make \$6.85 an hour but this is a part-time job for me. Thank God I have a real job too or I couldn't make it." She pointed

out that workers employed by Lisbon Cleaners were making considerably less.

Not all workers were sympathetic to those arrested. Santiago, an older worker and longtime employee at Continental, remarked, "As an American, I think [the raid] was pretty good."

But all the workers interviewed, including Santiago, wondered what role Continental actually played in the raid. The carrier has claimed no prior knowledge of the

government's action. Peggy Mahoney, a Continental spokesperson, said that the planes were cleaned the night of the raid by members of a traveling maintenance crew who just happened to be available at midnight. "It was just a coincidence that we had enough personnel to get these planes cleaned overnight," she said.

Federal officials said the raid was the culmination of a 15-month investigation of undocu-

mented workers at the airport. Mahoney stated that the company was "cooperating fully with the investigation now, as we do with all investigations."

Don Mitchell, an International Association of Machinists (IAM) member working at Northwest Airlines, said, "The IAM should come to the defense of these people. The raid shows that we have to see each other as co-workers, not someone competing for a job."

## London Pathfinder books rebuilds after flood damage

LONDON — Some 20 volunteers responded quickly to severe flooding of the Pathfinder bookshop here April 3. The deluge, which came from water left running overnight in the apartment above, broke through into the shop destroying thousands of dollars worth of books by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and other revolutionaries.

Cleanup crews salvaged important archives, including journals of the communist movement dating back to the Second World War, and began assessing losses while others removed gallons of water.

Despite the crisis, subscriptions to the *Militant* were sent out on time and a mailing of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign building for a summer youth brigade to Havana was also dispatched.

"Our immediate priority is to replace the books and get the doors open again with some temporary repairs within 48 hours," Celia Pugh, the bookshop manager, said. All help in repairing the bookshop is welcome. Please contact the Pathfinder bookshop at the address listed on page 12.

	Militant goal	Perspectiva Mundial goal	New International goal
<b>Australia</b>	40	6	15
<b>Britain</b>			
London	70	5	30
Manchester	60	4	25
<b>Total</b>	130	9	55
<b>Canada</b>			
Montreal	75	25	45
Toronto	85	15	45
Vancouver	70	8	20
<b>Total</b>	230	48	110
<b>France</b>	10	5	20
<b>Greece</b>	10	1	4
<b>Iceland</b>	15	1	3
<b>New Zealand</b>			
Auckland	80	6	20
Christchurch	40	2	10
Wellington	10		4
<b>Total</b>	130	8	34
<b>Puerto Rico</b>	2	8	5
<b>Sweden</b>	40	15	40
<b>United States</b>			
Atlanta	90	20	25
Birmingham	70	5	20
Boston	100	30	35
Brooklyn	130	40	65
Chicago	130	30	50
Cincinnati	15		
Cleveland	65	12	20
Des Moines	85	36	30
Detroit	95	10	28
Greensboro	70	8	20
Houston	80	15	20
Los Angeles	180	90	90
Miami	105	45	60
Morgantown, WV	55	2	20
New York	135	30	75
Newark, NJ	130	35	60
Peoria, IL	50	2	20
Philadelphia	115	30	45
Pittsburgh	105	12	30
Salt Lake City	105	20	35
San Francisco	150	45	75
Seattle	85	15	25
Twin Cities, MN	120	17	35
Washington, DC	80	30	35
<b>Total U.S.</b>	2345	579	918
<b>International Total</b>	2952	680	1204
<b>IN THE UNIONS</b>			
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>			
EU	5	1	2
MWU	4		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	9	1	3
<b>U.S.</b>			
ACTWU/ILGWU	28	17	16
IAM	75	15	33
OCAW	55	6	25
UAW	100	10	40
UFCW	15	25	12
UMWA	23		7
USWA			
UTU	85	7	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	381	80	163
<b>UNION TOTALS</b>	390	81	166

ACTWU-Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; AEEU-Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AFMEU-Automotive, Food, Metals and Engineering Union; CAW-Canadian Auto Workers; EU-Engineers Union; FPU-Food Preservers' Union; IAM-International Association of Machinists; ILGWU-International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; MWU-Meat Workers Union; NUM-National Union of Mineworkers; NUW-National Union of Workers; OCAW-Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT-National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU-Transport and General Workers Union; UAW-United Auto Workers; UFBGWU-United Food, Beverage and General Workers Union; UFCW-United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA-United Mine Workers of America; USWA-United Steelworkers of America; UTU-United Transportation Union.



# NJ students debate Cuban revolution

BY LAURA GARZA

MONTCLAIR, New Jersey — "Cuba reached an important stage in the revolution, and there were two roads to take," said Kenia Serrano, a Cuban youth leader, describing the economic crisis Cuba has been facing for several years known as the "special period." "One was to give up the revolution, the other was to resist — the Cuban people decided to resist."

Serrano was speaking to a packed meeting of more than 150 people at Montclair State College in New Jersey sponsored by the Latin American Student Organization (LASO). Many Cuban-American students attend Montclair State College and the meeting, titled "Why Education is Free in Cuba," drew students and others with varying views on Cuba, including a number who were strong opponents of the revolution.

A tone of civil discussion for the event was set by LASO president Steve Buendia who opened by saying, "This is a meeting where we'll have freedom of speech, of debate, and always maintain a level of maturity." The assistant dean of students, James Harris, was also on stage and welcomed Serrano.

"Facing the loss of 95 percent of our trade with the fall of the socialist camp, we had to search for ways to deal with this and become part of the world market," Serrano explained in detailing some of the economic problems in Cuba. "But we acted with the goal of maintaining our independence, our sovereignty, our free health care guaranteed for all, and our education, and to be a country where we are the owners of everything."

"We face problems we can't solve," Serrano said. "However, we continue searching for ways to solve them and maintain our independence. We know the solution won't arrive through the barrel of a gun of a foreign nation."

Hands shot into the air to ask questions and make comments as Serrano finished her presentation.

Asked about the impact of the economic crisis on education, Serrano noted,

"There are days when classrooms have no electricity, and the diet we provide to the children is below the quality we used to give. It has been six years since new editions of textbooks have been printed." But, she continued, "In our budget for 1995 spending was increased for education, health, social security, and research. And not one school or hospital has been closed."

Challenging Serrano's presentation Guillermo Enriquez Díaz declared he was a Cuban who had been "enjoying freedom for one week." He said Serrano claimed "in Cuba there is a live people, but I say the people are dead. Youth throw themselves into the sea because they prefer to die rather than continue living there. I am one of those."

Serrano responded, "I am glad you are here. Sometimes we think we are all one country, but that is an error. There are people who feel like you do. Many of those who left last August were young. But why not speak also of the 10 million who stayed? I'm not saying there are not problems."

She challenged the notion often given of Cuba as a country where people can't say what they think. "We're accused by the U.S. government of not having democracy. But here workers go out on strike and then they get fired. We don't want that kind of democracy in Cuba. We don't want the democracy where a few are very rich and the majority have very little," she said.

"You mentioned a new budget," asked another participant. "Given the economic problems, what is the discussion about the country's deficit and measures that need to be taken?"

Serrano said Cuba's workers have discussed measures to deal with the economic crisis in a series of 80,000 meetings called workers parliaments. Workers took up problems of inefficiency in production, of theft of goods diverted to the black market often with the aid of administrators, and debated measures to deal with the most pressing problems. Serrano said pro-



Kenia Serrano (left) speaks at Montclair State College. Inset: Guillermo Enriquez Díaz challenges Serrano's support for Cuban revolution during discussion period.

posals to institute some form of taxes on wages was hotly debated. Students participated in debates at the congress of the Federation of University Students (FEU).

Another audience member who said she left Cuba four years ago said the main problem was that Cuba's government needed to change. "You have to study six years and only then can you select a career in Cuba. When you get that chance, and can study and then pass you might have to work like a laborer in the fields," she said indignantly.

"It's a shame you were not at the FEU congress. I heard the same things in the discussion and debate there," Serrano answered. "To have the chance to go to the university, what other way should there be if not through proving yourself by study and work. You don't have to show your family connections in Cuba, or prove your income to get into the university. When you graduate you should have a sense of honor to work with those who produce for the basic needs of the country."

In contrast to Cuba, Serrano referred to the conditions being imposed on Mexico for the loan package worked out by Wash-

ington after the devaluation of the peso. "The U.S. says it is 'helping' with loans of \$20 billion but we shouldn't believe it's aid, or for charity's sake; the U.S. has to do this because it will affect the dollar and its economy. Cuba won't face this situation. We are owners of our country and we won't negotiate the freedom of Cuba to have a few more items in the stores."

Among those who joined in welcoming Serrano was Montclair mayor James Bishop. The mayor of Newark, Sharpe James, sent a message to the meeting. Greetings were also sent by Montclair/Pearl Lagoon Nicaragua Sister City Project, the New Jersey Network on Cuba, and the northern New Jersey branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Those groups also had representatives present at the meeting.

Organizers of the event expressed satisfaction that an open exchange of views, though sometimes heated, was able to take place. Many previous attempts to organize meetings in New Jersey to learn about Cuba have been disrupted by opponents of the revolution who support Washington's embargo and hostile policy against Cuba.

## Cuban youth learns about Cat workers' struggle

BY JOHN STAGGS

YORK, Pennsylvania — Workers on strike against Caterpillar here spent a morning talking to Cuban youth leader Kenia Serrano recently. Some 1,200 York strikers are part of a nationwide walkout now in its 10th month against the giant earth-moving equipment company.

The Cuban youth's visit had been announced at the weekly information meeting of the strikers' union, United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 786. Unionists were eager to meet her and talk about their fight.

Strikers painted a picture for Serrano of the current stage of their struggle, the attacks they are up against, and why they are still going strong.

On the picket line, strikers pointed out the Vance Security guards around the plant to Serrano. These company-hired thugs use cameras and microphones to provoke the strikers and try to collect "evidence" against union members. Since the UAW's fight for a contract began, strikers told her, 27 workers have been fired in York.

One of the fired workers, Ken Hite, talked to Serrano about his experiences in the strike.

When he became a union steward and actively helped forge solidarity among workers in his department, Caterpillar fabricated an incident to fire him, Hite said. He has since been "fired" two more times for "picket line misconduct." He showed Serrano one letter from the company.

Referring to the "picket line misconduct," the letter read, "This would have resulted in your termination if you had been a Caterpillar employee who had not already been discharged."

Hite also told Serrano about one discussion with a supervisor in which he was informed: "America stops here at the gate. There is no free speech here."

"Isn't this a strange kind of freedom in this country?" Serrano remarked.

The Cuban youth also heard from strikers about the strength they have drawn from efforts to build solidarity with their strike. Hite said he and other strikers spend their time spreading the word about the Caterpillar fight. The day before, Hite had spoken at a rally of 1,000 striking transit workers in Philadelphia.

Serrano was eager to learn about working conditions and political life in the United States. She wanted to know whether workers had a right to a job and a right to strike. She asked whether assemblies were organized where plant managers would discuss the problems in the plant.

Serrano was especially interested in learning about the role of women and Blacks in the workforce. She asked about the number of unionized workers in the United States, expressing her surprise at learning that only 13 percent of workers are in unions. In Cuba, she explained, nearly all workers are unionized.

Union leader Terry Orndorff described Caterpillar's union-busting efforts to the Cuban youth. Pointing to a large map in his office, Orndorff showed Serrano the cities where Caterpillar has opened nonunion plants.

He described the situation at the Joliet, Illinois, factory. Caterpillar had threatened to close the facility if workers did not agree to a contract with many of the same concessions the union is fighting today. Orndorff said this inroad at Joliet made the fight harder. Likewise, "if we accept the same concessions, it will affect all of labor," he said.

Union president Barry Koicuba and others asked Serrano about conditions in Cuba. The youth leader said she thought there were similarities between the Cuban people's fight and the Caterpillar strikers'

struggle.

Serrano said that people in her country are fighting for their right to national sovereignty in the face of the U.S. government's trade embargo just as the strikers are fighting for their right to the union.

She also told the strikers what she had learned about their fight against Caterpil-

lar that morning, "and what I know about the embargo against Cuba makes me wonder what kind of democracy the United States is."

John Staggs is a member of United Auto Workers Local 1695 in Lansdale, Pennsylvania.

## Youth in California discuss lessons of Cuban revolution

BY JENNIFER BANATHY AND REBECCA GETTLEMAN

Cuban youth leaders Rogelio Polanco and Kenia Serrano toured the San Francisco Bay Area March 15-18 speaking on the current situation in Cuba and how it relates to youth today. They spoke at three college campuses and several meetings with young activists working to defend immigrant and abortion rights and youth with the American Indian Movement (AIM).

The Cubans expressed a particular interest in meeting young people active in the fight for immigrant rights. The first gathering they spoke at was of the Movement for Immigrant Rights, a coalition that has been active against California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187. Participants in the meeting asked about the workers' assemblies in Cuba and what Serrano and Polanco thought of developments in Central America.

At a meeting with AIM youth and Global Exchange, which sponsors trips to Cuba, Serrano and Polanco were asked about daily life in Cuba for young people and how people in the United States can support the revolution. The Cubans encouraged people to learn about Cuba and

travel there to see for themselves.

Polanco and Serrano spoke to approximately 150 students at De Anza College, the University of California at Berkeley, and San Francisco State University.

Questions around human rights violations were raised on more than one occasion. They replied that human rights include the right to free education, free medical care, free expression of opinions, equality without discrimination based on skin color or gender, equal access to employment for all, the right to vote at 16, and the right to run for office at 18.

All of these rights exist in Cuba, they explained, and despite the fact that Cuba isn't a perfect society, these rights represent the democratic system enabling the Cuban people to develop their society as they desire. They contrasted this to capitalist countries, like the United States, which under the guise of democracy violate the human rights of millions of immigrants, Blacks, women, Native Americans, and workers.

Jennifer Banathy is a member of the Young Socialists. Rebecca Gettleman is a member of the YS and of the United Transportation Union.



# Cuban youth to host international festival

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Youth organizations in Cuba are beginning to build an international youth festival to be held the first week of August in Havana and other Cuban cities.

"Yesterday we officially issued the public call for the festival at a press conference here," said Ibis Alvisa González, a leader of Cuba's Union of Young Communists (UJC) in a phone interview from Havana on April 5. The other host organizations in Cuba are the Federation of University Students, the Federation of High School Students, and the José Martí Pioneers Organization.

"We're inviting the largest possible number of young people" to the August 1-7 event, Alvisa emphasized.

## Broad attendance encouraged

"The festival will be very broad. It's open to all who want to join — regardless of ideology, race, religion, or nationality — in a discussion among youth around the world about our common interests," she said.

Alvisa cited Copenhagen as one place where Cuban youth leaders already began to publicize the international festival. Cuban president Fidel Castro received a huge ovation from young people who flocked to hear him speak March 11.

More than 4,500 attended a public meeting that he addressed during a visit to the Danish capital for a United Nations conference.

Students and young workers from all over northern Europe, many of whom had come out of curiosity, were surprised to hear Castro address problems they face such as unemployment and the oppression of women, and cheered him enthusiastically. Many returned home with a hunger to learn more about the Cuban revolution.

At the "Cuba Lives" International Youth Festival, Alvisa reported, "we will discuss topics such as employment, social development, the environment, culture, national identity, and health care. It will be an opportunity for those attending to share experiences with Cuban youth and get to know the reality of Cuba."

"The conference will begin in Havana, and then people will deepen the discussion by traveling to one of seven different provinces, depending on the topic." There they will meet youth in other cities and ru-

ral areas of eastern and western Cuba. This will give the visitors a broader feel for the nationwide effort by working people in Cuba to combat the repercussions of the world capitalist economic crisis and defend the gains of their socialist revolution.

## March against blockade

"On one of the days of the festival there will be a big march to oppose the U.S. blockade against Cuba," the UJC leader said. "The festival will include time for recreation and cultural activities too."

Alvisa said an informational flyer to build the festival has just been produced and will be distributed widely.

In the United States, word about the event is beginning to get out as a result of a nationwide speaking tour by two Cuban youth leaders, Rogelio Polanco and Kenia Serrano, who have been inviting students and others to participate.

Those wanting information about the International Youth Festival and how to get there can contact the Union of Young Communists, International Relations Department, Avenida de las Misiones 5 y 7, Havana, Cuba. Tel: (011-537) 625-644 or 625-672. Direct dialing to Cuba from the United States is now possible.



Militant/Laura Garza

Students demonstrate in defense of Cuban revolution on the steps of University of Havana, September 1994. Cuban youth organizations are inviting worldwide participation in a youth festival to be held in Havana and other Cuban cities August 1-7.

## SEPTA workers halt Philadelphia transit

BY PETE SEIDMAN

PHILADELPHIA — One thousand members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 234 and supporters rallied here March 29 to back their strike against the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA).

They cheered when Henry Nicholas, president of Local 1199C of the hospital and health-care workers union, presented them with a check for \$50,000. The crowd warmly received a message of solidarity brought by two members of United Auto Workers union Local 786 from York, Pennsylvania, on strike against Caterpillar.

As the walkout entered its ninth day April 5, TWU members had shut down 90 percent of SEPTA's operations here.

On April 2, TWU members who are mechanics and clerks on the suburban Red

Arrow division joined the strike after their contract expired at midnight. Within an hour, SEPTA had locked out Red Arrow drivers, represented by United Transportation Union Local 1594, cutting service to another 21,000 riders.

On April 6 the contract covering TWU members who drive buses on SEPTA's Frontier Division in Delaware, Montgomery, and Bucks counties will expire, potentially affecting service to another 3,500 people.

Despite the power of the strike, which is costing downtown businesses an estimated \$1.7 million a day, SEPTA has so far refused to budge. Transit officials say they will not meet the TWU's demands for a 3 percent wage increase in each year of the three-year contract.

SEPTA's wage offer is for 2 percent increases in December of the first two years

of the contract, and 3 percent in December of the last year. The TWU points out that this "backloading" of the wage increases amounts to an offer of only 1.25 percent per year — actually a pay cut when inflation is taken into account!

From the first day of the strike, SEPTA obtained an injunction against the TWU limiting the number of pickets. The company has also cut off health benefits to strikers.

Police arrested 10 union members April 4, accusing them of obstructing traffic during the morning rush hour on the already jammed-up Schuylkill Expressway.

## —YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD— YS members visit Caterpillar picket lines

BY TOM ALTER  
AND JENNY BENTON

EAST PEORIA, Illinois — "Our determination today is as strong as it was the first day of the strike," stated Larry

Walker, a member of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union on strike against Caterpillar. This was the message members of the Young Socialists who participated in a national sales team of the *Mili-*

tant newspaper heard on the picket lines.

Young Socialist member Gloria Del Cid of Peoria, Illinois, and Socialist Workers Party member Nelson Gonzales, a steelworker in Salt Lake City, Utah, joined us on the team. We spoke with striking workers from Caterpillar plants in East Peoria and Mapleton, Illinois.

In addition to selling the *Militant*, the team campaigned for Betsy Farley, the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Decatur, Illinois. Many workers showed interest in the campaign and accepted campaign literature. Discussions around the campaign centered on crime and the situation of immigrant workers in the United States.

One striking worker expressed the need of union workers in the United States to build solidarity with workers in Mexico.

Workers were excited to see that young people and students were interested and supportive of their fight. The strikers and team members discussed the importance of educating other youth about the struggles being waged today.

UAW members firmly asserted that they are not on strike for themselves. They said they are fighting to defend their rights as workers and to ensure that the next generation of workers will not lose what they have already won.

The Young Socialists who participated on the team found the strikers ready to discuss a variety of issues. Workers discussed the Mexican peso crisis, the Cuban revolution, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as well as the strike against Caterpillar. Strikers also showed interest in hearing Cuban youth leader Kenia Serrano during her upcoming speaking tour of Illinois.



Militant/Ben Fiering

Members of Young Socialists have been actively building New York City and State demonstrations against proposed cuts in education, health care, and entitlements. YS leader Jack Willey, right, sells the *Militant* at March 23 protest.

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# The bosses' drive against women's rights

Ruling-class offensive aims to divide workers and weaken class consciousness

Printed below are major excerpts from the introduction to *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*. The book, published by Pathfinder Press, is a collection of articles by Joseph Hansen and Evelyn Reed. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder, copyright © 1986. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Today the employers are once again making a concerted political effort to roll back, or at least slow down, some of the changes in consciousness about women's place in society. They are taking aim at concrete gains won through hard struggle in the 1960s and 1970s, such as abortion rights and affirmative action programs.

The goal of the bosses and their government is not to drive women out of the labor force, but to undermine their class consciousness and political self-confidence. The goal is to make women more willing to acquiesce in attacks on wages, working conditions, social services, affirmative action programs, and equality on the job. In this way, the employers are attempting to hold back the increase in the value of women's labor power (and thereby that of the class as a whole), and to enforce greater discipline and "productivity" by imposing speedup and more dangerous working conditions.

These attacks on women's rights are part of a broader offensive that the U.S. capitalist class has been waging for more than a decade. The target is all working people, and all those whose race, sex, language, or national origin is used by the ruling class to single them out for superexploitation and special oppression. The employers are determined to fundamentally shift the relationship of forces between capital and labor that was established following the post-World War II strike wave.

## Intensifying capitalist offensive

This intensifying capitalist offensive began with the 1974-75 world recession and picked up steam with the 1980-82 recession. It is directed against the wages, job conditions, democratic rights, and organizations of the working class. It is aimed at heading off progress toward political independence by the working class

toward any notion that labor should develop and fight for its own positions on social and political questions, independent of and opposed to those of the bosses and bosses' parties.

This offensive has been registered in a rightward shift of the entire bipartisan structure of capitalist politics in the United States. It has been accompanied by a sustained ideological offensive aimed at dividing the working class more deeply between employed and unemployed, and along the lines of race, sex, age, skill levels, language, and national origin. A special goal has been to reverse gains won by Blacks and women, who over the previous period fought their way through some of the barriers that keep them confined to second-class status in capitalist society in general, and within the labor force in particular....

When the bosses go on a stepped-up offensive to shift the relationship of forces in their favor, they play every card in the deck — war and the threat of military aggression abroad; more naked use of the cops and courts at home (whether against Blacks, immigrant workers, farmers, or strikers); massive cuts in social services; tax hikes; union busting and concession contracts. At the same time, they wage a political campaign to justify their course as being in the interests of "all of us." They talk about "equality of sacrifice," the "national interest," "labor-management cooperation," and "common cultural values."

Within this framework, the rulers single out special targets as part of their broad frontal assault. One of these is always the



Ford assembly plant. Women gained political confidence after working nontraditional jobs during World War II.

progressive changes taking place in women's social status. The employers are aiming at the advances of working-class women especially, but the barrage is necessarily directed against all women. The second sex must be taught to know its place.

The attack on women's rights is fundamental to the success of the capitalist offensive. Discrimination against women is one of the most important ways in which the rulers work to deepen divisions within the working class. Its acceptance helps the bosses keep the labor movement shackled to a narrow trade union perspective, instead of thinking in broader social terms and acting politically to advance the interests of the oppressed and exploited. The perpetuation of women's subordinate status is one more obstacle along the road to independent working-class political action.

The employers aim to undermine working-class women's consciousness of themselves as workers, as part of the working class, and instead to heighten their consciousness of themselves as women — not in the feminist sense, but in all the retrograde ways that are drummed into women from childhood. The employing class seeks to reinforce the prejudices about women's proper place and domestic role. It seeks to convince women that they want to be dependent on a man, with the second-class status that entails.

Such prejudices, and the ways women internalize them, go back millennia. But the rise and development of capitalism progressively undermines them, as it forces women out of the home and off the farm and pushes them as individuals into the labor market — with all the brutality inherent in the capitalist mode of production.

The capitalists' offensive against women's rights is not aimed at driving women out of the work force. That is historically precluded. The percentage of wage and salaried workers who are female has been rising, from one plateau to another, ever since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Instead, the aim is to make women more vulnerable to increased exploitation. The goal is not to push women out of the labor market but to push them down — to jobs with fewer paid holidays, more piece work, less safety, shorter lunch breaks, less union protection, and lower wages.

Women have always made up an important component of the pool of unemployed workers that Marx called the industrial reserve army of labor. This reserve army never disappears under capitalism, even in the best of times. But in a period of capitalist stagnation such as we have lived through over the last decade, the owners of capital need to expand this army of the unemployed in order to intensify competition among workers and thus drive down wages....

## Ideological offensive

The bosses' ideological campaign seeks to reinforce the idea among both sexes that women are "natural" recruits to this reserve army. They are "normally" only marginal workers, temporary workers, part-time workers, home workers. Women are only a "second" wage earner in the family. In periods of rising joblessness, there are always assertions by ruling-class "opinion molders" that unemployment statistics are artificially high, since women should not really be counted as unemployed in the same way as men, who are considered the main breadwinners. This propaganda is aimed at convincing women to accept, with less resistance and resentment, temporary unemployment, or new jobs at lower wages....

The capitalists want women to blame themselves, not the social relations of production, for the economic and social problems they confront every day. The goal is to make women feel guilty that their children are being permanently damaged by "abandonment" in child-care facilities (if they exist), or are being turned into lonely latch-key delinquents. Rather than demanding — as a right — both child-care facilities and equal access to high-paying jobs previously barred to them, women are pushed toward being grateful for any job, at any wage.

Part of the rulers' strategy is also to deepen race divisions. They seek to break down solidarity and intensify competition between women workers who are fighting their way into nontraditional jobs and Black workers, who constitute a large proportion of the politically more conscious, vanguard layers of the working class. Since women are getting jobs that men "ought" to have, they are alleged to be responsible for the high rate of unemployment of Black males....

Even the notion that backward, prejudiced men are the source of women's problems is accorded a favored niche in the employers' propaganda arsenal as an alternative to the truth that the capitalist system is responsible for perpetuating the oppression of women.

## Rail worker fights and wins job back

BY TIM RIGBY

MANCHESTER, England—In a victory for rail workers, Shellia Kennedy, a rail track worker and union fighter at Piccadilly station here, returned to her job on the track March 30. The win is a product of a six-month fight against attempts by British Rail to victimize Kennedy and isolate her from her co-workers, members of the National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers (RMT). The bosses had tried to brand the unionist as an unsafe worker and to remove her permanently from working on the track. Kennedy's work record, at the union's insistence, has been cleared of any references to her as an unsafe worker.

The attack on Kennedy began Aug. 25, 1994, when she was summarily suspended from work without charges. Management claimed it was investigating unspecified "safety" issues.

The suspension occurred during a fight by railroad signal workers against Railtrack, one of 25 business operations on the British Rail network.

Beginning in June 1994, signal workers carried out a series of one- and two-day strikes against Railtrack's demands for concessions on work schedules, overtime pay, and other issues. Workers also demanded a more substantial raise than the paltry 2.5 percent offered by the company. By late August, the struggle had become the longest sustained action by rail workers since World War I, and the big-business press was floating the possibility of mass firings.

When Kennedy was suspended, local members of the RMT began a vigorous defense effort. Within days hundreds of

union members had signed a petition demanding her reinstatement. The signers included the RMT general-secretary, Jimmy Knapp; Vernon Hince, the union's chief negotiator in the signal workers' dispute; Andy Warnock-Smith, the local union divisional organizer; and all the members of the Manchester signal workers strike committee.

Signal workers saw Kennedy's fight as their own, and they took petition sheets to strike meetings and conferences around the country.

After two weeks management was forced to reinstate Kennedy. At the same time the company declared her an "unsafe" worker and moved her to a depot away from mainline working. The union issued leaflets explaining that the real issue had nothing to do with safety. Not one of Kennedy's co-workers could be found by management to testify against her as an unsafe worker, nor could management provide any hard evidence to back up their allegations.

The real issue was Kennedy's trade union activities. Long before the suspension, her supervisor had begun a harassment campaign against Kennedy. This followed her participation in a successful fight by Manchester track workers against management forcing compulsory night work on them. Kennedy had also been outspoken in her support for the national signal workers' strike actions. Her suspension came at a time when management was supposed to be investigating victimization charges Kennedy had laid against her supervisor.

The signal workers' strike actions ended in October with the Railtrack

bosses forced to back down from many of the sweeping changes they had intended to impose upon the workforce. Most signal workers also received substantial pay hikes. This victory gave confidence to union members to continue fighting for Kennedy to be returned to her original job and for her work record to be cleared.

In spite of management's refusal to abide by recognized grievance procedures and several attempts to delay a decision in Kennedy's case, the local union branch continued to publicize her case and to maintain pressure on the bosses. Their efforts have finally borne success.

Tim Rigby is a member of the RMT in Manchester, recently laid off from his job as a guard (conductor).



Rail worker Shellia Kennedy



# Pro-choice action to protest rightist rally

BY MARY ELLEN MARUS

MONTREAL — More than 15,000 leaflets are being handed out at subway stations and other spots throughout this city to publicize an April 19 protest rally against Human Life International (HLI). The group opposes a woman's right to choose abortion. HLI's leaders espouse a virulent brand of rightist politics, targeting gays, Jews, and Muslims. The Coalition Against Human Life International called the demonstration.

Randall Terry, leader of the U.S.-based antiabortion outfit Operation Rescue, is to be one of the keynote speakers addressing the 1,500 expected delegates to the HLI annual conference in Montreal April 18-23. Terry has recently been under house arrest for using violent tactics in blocking access to abortion clinics.

Antiabortion themes will be the focus of the conference. However, seminars on "The Muslim Threat to the World" (renamed in later brochures) and "Homosexuality: the Courage to Change" are also featured.

HLI opposes the gains that women have made over the last several decades, including access to contraception, and abortion, and day care for their children. The group publishes tracts entitled "The Feminist Takeover," "Sex Education: the Final Plague," and "Ungodly Rage: the Hidden Face of Catholic Feminism." The Montreal Catholic archbishop has provided Notre Dame Basilica for the groups opening Mass.

In a speech delivered to an HLI World Conference, Paul Marx, a Catholic priest who is the founder and chairman of the group, said, "Muslims are taking over Western Europe."

In his brochure "Confessions of a Pro-Life Missionary," Paul Marx wrote that "a segment of the Jewish community...led the greatest holocaust of all time, the war

on unborn babies" and urged his followers, "to note the large number of abortionists (consult the Yellow Pages) and pro-abortion medical professors who are Jewish."

HLI handouts state the need "to alert the nation to the true conspiracy" of gays and "subversive elements" who, according to HLI, want AIDS "to spread and weaken America so they can rule the world."

To protest the right-wing ideas, and anti-choice and racist propaganda of HLI, the Coalition Against Human Life International has come together involving some 40 women's, student, community, and political organizations. The group is organizing the counter-demonstration to take place during HLI's mass April 19. When HLI concludes its service with a candle-light march through the streets of Montreal, the counter-demonstration will follow them in opposition.

"We have to take every opportunity to make sure that Human Life International and its extreme right-wing ideas of hate, intolerance, and rage don't gain any ground in Montreal," explains the publicity for the counterdemonstration.

The coalition plans to have speakers from Muslim groups, student and community organizations, and political parties. A representative of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union is also scheduled to speak.

Students at McGill University are organizing an educational night April 12 to build the rally and to explain the threat HLI poses to women and others. Several students involved in this fight plan to attend the April 9 rally for women's rights in Washington, D.C.

HLI was condemned by the Teachers Federation of Quebec. At a recent general council meeting, three resolutions were passed protesting the policies of the right-wing antiabortion group.



Abortion clinic defenders outmobilize right-wing outfit Operation Rescue in Iowa City, Iowa 1991. Rightist leader Randall Terry will be met with protests in Montreal.

## 1,000 join April 1 march for women's rights in Bay Area

BY RASHAAD ALI

SAN FRANCISCO — More than 1,000 pro-choice supporters marched through the streets here April 1 in a demonstration "For Women's Lives." The action was called around demands to halt: antiabortion violence, the war on poor women, all violence against women, and to support full reproductive rights without restrictions. The mostly youthful demonstrators chanted, "We won't go back" as they marched past the federal and state government building.

This demonstration for women's rights received broad support. The action was sponsored by the San Francisco Area Pro-Choice Coalition.

Supporters of women's rights began organizing for the San Francisco demonstra-

tion in response to the December 30 murders of Shannon Lowney and Leann Nichols by an antiabortion gunman at Brookline, Massachusetts, clinics. It was also called as a West Coast action to coincide with the April 9 march for women's rights in Washington, D.C., called by NOW.

Renna Alyassum, a high school student, spoke at the rally drawing cheers when she spoke of the need to "get the government off our bodies." Her remarks about the important issues facing young people today struck a responsive cord among the youthful crowd. Many other speakers and singers participated in the program.

The next meeting of the Coalition will be April 17, for more information call (415) 995-2684.

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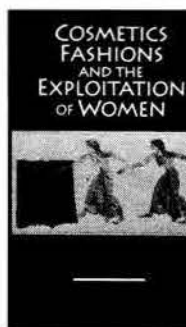
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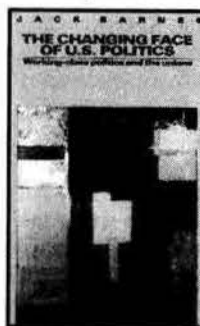
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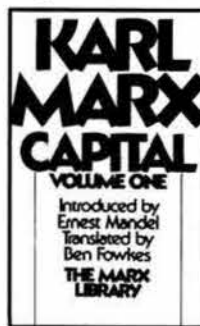
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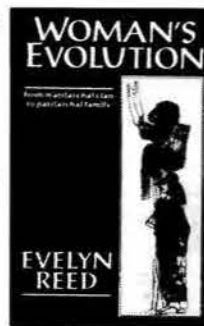
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# Canada resumes provocation on high seas

## Capitalist fishing rivalry with Spain, Portugal touches off widespread debate

BY ROGER ANNIS

MONTREAL — The Canadian government is continuing its provocative moves against the Spanish fishing fleet in the Northwest Atlantic in an attempt to assert its control over fish stocks outside the country's 200-mile maritime limit. The capitalist fishing rivalry has touched off widespread discussion among working people here.

On March 26, a Canadian coast guard vessel severed the net of the Spanish fishing trawler *Pescamara Uno*, sending the net and its catch, worth an estimated \$100,000, to the bottom of the Atlantic. The boat was fishing in international waters.

The previous day, inspectors from a Canadian fisheries patrol vessel tried unsuccessfully to board the Spanish vessel *Verdel* and stop it from fishing. Canadian

coast guard and fisheries department ships are interfering on a daily basis with the Spanish and Portuguese fishing fleets in the disputed waters.

### Row between capitalists

The Canadian government has vowed to stop all foreign fishing in international waters off its coast until new agreements on quotas that it finds acceptable are reached.

Spanish fleet owners have vowed to continue fishing.

The fish war was touched off on March 9 when Canadian coast guard and fisheries department ships seized the Spanish vessel *Estai* in international waters after a four-hour chase. The ship surrendered after several rounds of machine-gun fire were shot across its bow.

The Canadian government's actions re-

veal the deepening competition in the fishing industry between the capitalist classes on both sides of the Atlantic. Profit levels in the Northwest Atlantic fishery have plummeted because of overfishing by companies based in Canada, Europe, and elsewhere.

Beginning in 1992, moratoriums or deep cuts in quotas were declared on lucrative groundfish species, such as cod. Fifty thousand people in eastern Canada and thousands more in Europe and the northeastern United States have been thrown out of work in the aftermath.

Ottawa is using its drive for control over fishing areas outside of its territory to solve a serious domestic problem that the collapse of the fishery has dumped in its lap, namely the cost of special income security programs that it was forced to grant to fishery workers.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's plans to cut back on those costly entitlements have met with stiff opposition. So the Canadian government is attempting to deflect that heat by scapegoating foreign fishermen.

The dispute between Canada and Spain centers on a small fish called turbot. It is one of several less commercially valuable species that are being hunted with a vengeance since the sharp decline in groundfish catches began five years ago.

The total European catch, mainly by Spain and Portugal, of turbot rose from less than 5,000 tons in 1989 to 50,000 in 1993. The Canadian catch declined from 15,000 tons to 5,000 in those years as the government cut quotas.

The seizure of the *Estai* stirred up a torrent of protest from the governments of Spain and the European Union (EU). The ship's captain and owners were charged with violating a recently amended section of the Canadian Coastal Fisheries Protection Act wherein Ottawa unilaterally declared jurisdiction over fish stocks beyond its waters.

Madrid and the EU are demanding the repeal of that law and an end to any further seizures or other acts of interference. The Spanish government has begun to levy economic and diplomatic sanctions against Canada. The EU has ruled out sanctions so long as negotiations continue.

Following the seizure of the *Estai*, the Spanish government dispatched two lightly armed vessels to protect its fleet. It later sent a frigate.

Ottawa dispatched its most modern warship, the frigate HMCS *Halifax*, as well as its east-coast fleet of three submarines.

Under the pressure of protest in Europe, Ottawa freed the *Estai's* captain on \$8,000 bail. Several days later, on March 15, the ship was released after a \$500,000 bond was posted.

### Chauvinist campaign

Ottawa is waging a campaign to fan the flames of chauvinism against the Spanish and Portuguese fishing fleets, accusing them of decimating the few remaining fish stocks in the Northwest Atlantic.

On March 28, it organized an elaborate press conference along the East River in New York City to coincide with the opening of a week-long conference at the United Nations on the state of the world's fisheries. Canadian fisheries minister Brian Tobin and other officials hoisted a huge fishing net before dozens of assembled reporters from around the world, claiming that it belonged to the *Estai* and was retrieved from the ocean floor.

Tobin charged the net was proof that the Spanish fleet uses illegal, small-mesh net, designed to snag not only mature fish but immature ones as well. He said the *Estai's* hold contained groundfish species that are under moratorium and that the ship's captain kept two sets of books, one real and one doctored, intended to fool Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) inspectors that routinely board fishing craft while on the high seas. NAFO is an organization made up of countries fishing the Northwest Atlantic that is supposed to manage stocks.

Among the Canadian officials joining Tobin at the press conference was Earl McCurdy, president of the Newfoundland Food, Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, the largest union of fishery workers in Newfoundland. He told reporters that the captain and owners of the *Estai* "would be up on capital charges" if there were such a thing as a world environmental court.

The government's campaign has been backed by the environmental group Greenpeace as well.

It has also been picked up by capitalist spokesmen in Britain where fishing companies are competing with Spanish rivals for declining fish stocks. The British *Daily Mail* launched a write-in campaign urging the John Major government to back Canada's aggressive tactics against Spain. Many fishing craft are flying Canadian flags.

For their part, fishing company and municipal officials in Vigo, Spain, the home port of the *Estai*, organized a rally March

Continued on Page 12

# 2,000 demonstrate in Missouri to defend family farms against gov't, agribusiness

BY BILL KALMAN

UNIONVILLE, Missouri — More than 2,000 people, most of them farmers from this area, along with trade unionists and farm activists rallied in a muddy field here April 1 against Premium Standard Farm's (PSF) mega-hog production factory and the growth of large-scale hog farming operations.

The rally, coordinated by the Missouri Rural Crisis Center, featured country music singer Willie Nelson and drew people from Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois, Texas, Minnesota, Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina. "I personally enjoy seeing people fight for their rights," the well-known performer said. "I really get off on that."

Don Webb of the Alliance for Responsible Swine Industry in North Carolina told a jammed news conference before the rally, "I say fight, and fight the Democrats as well as the Republicans, both Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich. They're the ones responsible for the mess we're in."

The immediate object of protest at the Unionville rally was the Premium Standard Farms operation. The nearby landscape is dotted with its 72 modern swine barns containing 50,000 hogs.

### Hotly debated issue

The volatile issue of large-scale hog facilities operated by huge, diversified corporations like PSF is being hotly debated in rural areas from North Carolina to Utah. Iowa and Missouri are major battlegrounds in this fight.

PSF had initially planned to build its facility in Iowa. But after bumping into state regulations prohibiting corporations from owning farm land and protests from small farmers who depend on selling hogs to the packinghouses to stay on their land, the company decided to locate just below the Iowa border in Missouri. PSF's stated goal is to maintain some 80,000 sows here that will be processed in its own on-site packinghouse, with excess capacity trucked for sale to other nearby packinghouses.

Many small farmers oppose this new form of agricultural production because it threatens their livelihood. They have difficulty competing with facilities that produce hogs in assembly line fashion with nearly uniform weight and genetics (leanness). At the same time, the large meatpackers and other agribusiness interests favor moving rapidly to this form of production because it drives down the price they have to pay for hogs and puts them in a more favorable position to compete for the national and international market.

Here in Putnam County, many farmers and others are in an uproar over the stench that billows from PSF's voluminous hog waste. They say it is driving down land values in this primarily cattle grazing area and that the company's hog waste lagoons threaten the water table.

A bus and a van organized by Prairiefire, a Des Moines-based farm advocacy group, brought 50 rally participants. The bus stopped at the United Rub-



Farm support rally in Unionville, Missouri. "I say fight, and fight the Democrats as well as the Republicans," said Don Webb at a news conference before the protest.

ber Workers (URW) Local 310 union hall in Des Moines to pick up protesters, including two striking Firestone workers. Don Barrell, a URW striker who drove down with his wife, also a striker, told the *Militant*, "I think big-business corporate greed is doing it to all of us, farmers and labor. They don't care about us or the environment."

Students attended the rally from high schools in Owattuna and Stillwater, Minnesota; and Kirksville, Missouri. Two carloads of college students came from Northeast Missouri State as well.

Several trade union members from Putnam County and the surrounding rural area participated in the rally. Donnie Mustain, a member of United Auto Workers Local 710 in Chillicothe, Missouri, explained to the *Militant* why he and his wife made the 50-mile trip. "I'm a farmer," he said. "Most of my co-workers are farmers. If the corporations get power here, it will affect everyone, sooner or later."

More than 30 speakers from farm organizations, trade unions, and environmental and religious organizations spoke along with several local farmers who detailed PSF's history in the area.

Last June, the 146 registered voters of Lincoln Township enacted environmental laws regulating construction of hog facilities. PSF's response was to sue the township for \$7.9 million in damages. Mounting legal costs are devastating the township's modest finances. PSF recently dropped the monetary portion of the lawsuit. A number of speakers called on the company to drop its lawsuit altogether and abide by the local ordinance.

Not all residents of the area are opposed to the company. A woman interviewed while working at a nearby convenience store said, "They brought 1,500 jobs to

this area. You used to have to drive miles to find work. PSF is helping our school and building a new swimming pool in town. I am for them."

Many speakers at the rally placed the local fight here in the context of other battles being fought by working people. Denise O'Brien, president of the National Family Farm Coalition, said, "What is going on in Chiapas, Mexico, is what is going on right here in Unionville: transnational corporations are driving farmers off the land."

Mike Heath, an assembly line worker from UAW Local 249 at the Ford plant in Kansas City, Missouri, brought a check for \$500 from his union local. Heath told the *Militant*, "I believe that unionism means not just looking out for the UAW. It's about unity and solidarity. This is our fight, and we have to stand up with the farmers."

Ralph Paige of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives told the audience, "As jobs go, as food stamps go, as affirmative action goes, so too will rural America go. That is why we have to stick together, Black, white, Native American, unionist, and farmer. We have got to do direct action!"

Speakers for the National Family Farm Coalition, Prairiefire Rural Action, and the Missouri Rural Crisis Center announced from the platform that they are organizing a march from Unionville to Ames, Iowa, April 25. This 125-mile march will culminate in a protest rally outside the National Rural Conference sponsored by the Clinton administration.

Bill Kalman is a member of United Transportation Union Local 867 in Des Moines, Iowa. Jon Hillson from St. Paul, Minnesota, also contributed to this article.



# Chernobyl: final toll yet to be calculated

BY JON HILLSON

As the ninth anniversary of the nuclear meltdown at the Chernobyl atomic power plant in Ukraine on April 26, 1986, approaches, new information confirms that the final toll from the catastrophe has yet to be calculated.

According to a recently released article in the *British Medical Journal*, the rate of thyroid cancer in the region of northern Ukraine is now 200 times the normal figure. The disease, along with leukemia, and skin, nervous system, and respiratory ailments are attributed to massive fallout unleashed when a reactor at the power plant exploded, and sent tons of radioactive debris over a 10,000-square-mile area.

Most of the thyroid cancers, according to scientists from Russia, Ukraine, neighboring Belarus, and the World Health Organization, are being detected in children, whose glands are more sensitive to radiation. The effects of the Chernobyl fallout still contaminate water and land for hundreds of miles around the accident site where people continue to live.

The Soviet government under Mikhail Gorbachev, and its Russian successor under Boris Yeltsin, both covered up the extent of the impact of radiation, while failing to provide adequate health responses to current and potential victims.

A new meltdown at Chernobyl, where three of four reactors continue to generate electricity, is possible "at any time," according to a news report published in the *London Observer* last month. Scientists stated that a wall between an operating reactor and the entombed and deadly poisonous reactor destroyed in 1986 is unstable. Radioactive debris from the closed reactor that gets into the functioning reactor, or a collapse of the partition crumbling into it, could trigger another meltdown, the article noted.

Panic over this possibility was expressed in the *New York Times* recently by Georges de Menil, writing from Paris. A senior editor of the European ruling-class journal *Economic Policy*, de Menil urges "the West" to help Ukraine's pro-capitalist rulers with \$2 billion in loans to clean up and shutdown Chernobyl, "a ghost haunting Europe."

Closing the reactor is a condition for the Ukraine government to receive an outstanding \$100 million in promised loans from the International Monetary Fund, and any subsequent IMF consideration of new loans. Wracked by worsening dislocations in the transition to a "market economy," Ukraine's government says it is unable to finance the cleanup, and needs the 7 percent of the country's energy gener-



Militant/Rich Stuart

One of more than 13,000 Chernobyl children who has been treated in Cuba

ated by the Chernobyl reactors.

"A Ukraine in deepening economic crisis would need every last kilowatt of power that Chernobyl produced — until the next disaster," de Menil stated.

While children in Ukraine contract more cancers, European capitalists banter about the risks to their investments, loans, and profits — the bottom line for them on the question of Chernobyl.

In sharp contrast, Fidel Castro, speaking at the United Nations Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, in March, explained Cuba's efforts on behalf of those afflicted as a result of the 1986 nuclear debacle.

"Our country," the Cuban leader stated, "has treated more children who were victims of the Chernobyl tragedy than all other countries put together. More than 13,000 children from Chernobyl have been treated and continue to be treated despite the huge difficulties in our country."

Jon Hillson is a chemical plant worker in St. Paul, Minnesota.

## Revolutionary books draw youth in Mexico

BY MARK FRIEDMAN

MEXICO CITY — Over the course of 10 days in early March, more than 300,000 workers, students, and book professionals visited the annual Mexico City book fair held at the Palacio de Minería. Several hundred distributors, publishers, and bookstores set up booths to sell and promote titles in Spanish — from science to politics.

Tens of thousands of students from secondary schools and colleges attended. Some were assigned to write papers on the fair, or to buy a book and do a review.

Radicalizing youth were looking for answers to the unfolding crisis in Mexico. Pathfinder sold nearly 50 books of speeches by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, and other titles on Cuba during the fair. Three youth from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) pooled their money and bought the latest *New International*. They insisted that the devaluation of the peso and the world economic crisis were intimately connected. Later they attended a public forum on

"Cuba Today." There was also substantial interest in Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela. More than 40 books by them were sold including 10 copies of *Habla Malcolm X*.

Taking place during the current political and economic crisis in Mexico, including daily devaluations of the peso and the troop occupation of Chiapas, the Pathfinder booth became an attraction for those wanting to discuss politics. More than \$1,200 worth of Pathfinder books were sold. This included 35 copies of the *New International*. Nearly 20 of those were the English and Spanish editions that feature "Imperialism's march toward fascism and war."

Pathfinder representatives from four U.S. cities attended the fair and organized visits to local libraries, bookstores, and distribution houses. This coincided with major demonstrations on the campuses and at the Zócalo (the main plaza downtown), demanding government troops out of Chiapas, and workers marches demanding pay increases and an end to privatiza-

tions. Pathfinder sponsored a reception attended by 50 people. The mostly youthful crowd asked a broad range of questions. A number of students visiting the Pathfinder booth at the fair agreed to help get revolutionary titles into the libraries and bookstores in the region.

Cuban distributors had a large display and sold many books by Che, José Martí, and Castro, as well as cultural, sociological, and music books.



## PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

By Lisa Ahlberg

Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes books and pamphlets by revolutionary fighters whose struggles against capitalism, racism, and all forms of exploitation and oppression point the way forward for humanity. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 12.

Pathfinder Press has recently announced publication plans for several new titles and reprints.

*Lenin's Final Fight: Writings and Speeches, 1922-1923* will roll off the presses the last week in April. A special pre-publication discount off the \$19.95 cover price on advance orders will be available through May 31.

V.I. Lenin was the central political leader of the Bolshevik Party and of the October 1917 revolution in Russia. This book tells the story of an important chapter in the battle he waged for communist continuity in face of a privileged ruling layer that was consolidating itself in Russia in the early 1920s as worldwide revolutionary struggles receded.

*Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* has been reissued with an attractive new cover. From her political awakening as a schoolgirl in tsarist occupied Poland until her murder by thugs during the German revolution in 1919, Rosa Luxemburg acted and wrote as a proletarian revolutionist. Edited by Mary-Alice Waters, *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* takes us inside the political battles between revolution and class collaboration that still shape the modern workers movement.

To be reissued at the end of April with a new cover is *The Case of the Leg-*

less Veteran by James Kutcher. This book tells the story of the fight during the McCarthy era, supported by unions across the country, of a World War II veteran fired because of his communist views.

Representatives of Pathfinder attended the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association spring trade show in Spokane, Washington, in mid-March. An international team of supporters from Washington and British Columbia staffed the booth.

Several hundred bookstore buyers from Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon attended the fair. One bookstore buyer from Moscow, Idaho, was especially interested in Pathfinder titles on Cuba. He noted that there was an active group in town around issues concerning Latin America. Many buyers were particularly interested in *Mother Jones Speaks*. Pathfinder representatives presented their books as an important part of the debate and discussion going on today at a time of deepening economic crisis and "cultural wars."

Several book buyers responded favorably and Pathfinder supporters will be following up to seek orders from bookstores in cities such as Missoula, Montana; Spokane, Washington; and Moscow, Idaho.

There are regional and statewide trade shows geared toward bookstores and libraries, as well as book fairs and cultural events, throughout the year in every part of the country. Pathfinder supporters can take advantage of these opportunities to widen the reach of revolutionary and communist books.

## Volunteer labor makes Swedish 'Ny International' a reality

BY NAOMI CRAINE

"It took months of effort by volunteer workers to produce this new political weapon for the communist movement," said Catherina Tirsén, describing the publication of *Ny International* no. 2. The new issue of the Swedish edition of the Marxist magazine *New International* contains the articles "Defending Cuba, defending Cuba's socialist revolution"; "Imperialism's march toward fascism and war"; and "What the 1987 stock market crash foretold."

A team of 10 volunteers translated the articles, which appear in English in *New International* no. 10, between June 1994 and January 1995. They then worked over the translations several times for accuracy and consistent style. "And we proofread and proofread and proofread," Tirsén said.

"We collaborated by E-mail and phone" with volunteers in New York who had produced the English and Spanish editions of the magazine "to get the same style for lettering and to produce the beautiful cover that was printed in New York," she said. "It's amazing how you can work so closely together on two continents. We learned a lot that will help with future publishing projects."

A former printer used his small press to produce 100 four-page signatures to make up the text of the magazine, working in his

spare time. These were then collated by hand.

"All of this was done by workers who have different jobs, in car factories, breweries, and other industries," Tirsén noted. These workers have begun to sell the new issue of *Ny International* on the job. One of the volunteer translators who works at an airplane engine plant even got some help from a co-worker, who read the article on Cuba before publication and made some suggestions on how to clarify the translation.

Several workers who have read the article "said they appreciated seeing Cuba from the workers' point of view," stated Tirsén. Two copies of the *Ny International* were sold at a Militant Labor Forum in Stockholm March 31 where Mary-Alice Waters, the author of the article, spoke about the Cuban revolution today. Another participant bought the issue of *Nueva Internacional* in Spanish that includes the same articles. About 20 copies of the Swedish edition have been sold so far.

Besides selling *Ny International* on the job, on street tables, at political events, and in the Pathfinder bookstore, a mailing will go out to bookstores and individuals across Scandinavia announcing the new edition, together with the 1995 Pathfinder Press catalog.



# Fishing war

Continued from Page 10

15 to demand the ship's release. News reports from France said between 80,000 and 100,000 people demonstrated.

The head of the European fisheries inspectorate, Daniel Dunkley, who is from Britain, responded to the Canadian government's charges March 31 stating that Tobin and his inspectors are "either lying...or they are incompetent."

Dunkley reminded reporters that the *Es-tai* was inspected three times by Canadian officials in December and January and they reported no illegal practices.

The British government has expressed "sympathy" for the Canadian position, but it insists along with other EU governments that Canada cannot be allowed to usurp unilateral control over international waters. The U.S. government has likewise refused to support Ottawa's position.

An editorial in the March 16, 1995, *Globe and Mail* sounded a warning to the Canadian government. The *Globe* is one of the principal mouthpieces of big business in Canada and it has backed Ottawa's stand. Its editors warned about the economic consequences for Canada's rulers if the government pushes its policy of confrontation too far. They cited the two-way trade of \$28 billion between Canada and Europe as well as the uncertainty of Canada coming out on top if ever a shooting war with Spain develops.

"This adventurism cannot continue," they concluded. "Negotiation...is the only solution." Without the backing of its ally in Washington, Ottawa does not have the economic or military muscle needed to impose its will on its rivals in Europe.

Ottawa also has to contend with opinion at home in deciding how far to push.

"I spent 12 years as a commercial fisherman on the South Shore of Nova Scotia," wrote Raymond Roger in a letter to the March 18 *Globe and Mail*, "and I...witnessed Canadian draggers coming in trip after trip with those same 'baby' fish aboard. Where were federal officials then?"

The *Globe* editors themselves admitted in their March 16 editorial, "If the turbot are disappearing, along with the cod and flounder, Canadians are largely to blame."

Many working people believe that the Canadian government's action was justified. Others express the view that Ottawa must share the blame for the disaster.

"We've suffered job losses and layoffs," one worker at the SeaFreeze fish processing factory in Canso, Nova Scotia, told a television interviewer. "The Spanish should share some of it as well," he said.

"I think it was justified," said striking Canadian National Railway (CN) conductor François Guérin while walking the picket line during the recent national rail strike. "Somebody has to start doing something before there's no more fish left."

"That fight over fish is a real farce," said Claude Proulx, another CN striker. "They've all taken too many fish out of the sea. Canada has been the worst, and now they want to blame it on the Spanish. The Canadian government is even stirring up xenophobia against Spanish fishermen. It makes me sick."

"Do you want to know what really happened there?" Proulx said. "All the big boat owners took too many fish. It's happening all around the world. But it's the small fishermen who suffer, in Canada and in Spain. Now the owners want to set the fishermen against each other."

"I don't think the Canadian government was right to take that ship," said Ron a worker at MacMillan Bathurst Inc. in Montreal, who worked in the Newfoundland fishery as a youth. "They're the ones who took 90 percent of the fish. Now they just want to control it all."

## Correction

An error was introduced into the March 27 column by Mark Curtis on the death penalty. It incorrectly stated there were 100,000 industrial deaths in 1994.

In a decade-long study of occupational injury deaths, the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports 63,589 workers died from occupational injuries from 1980 to 1989. That translates into about 17 workers a day killed on the job.

# MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

The Militant Labor Forum is a weekly free-speech meeting for workers, farmers, youth, and others. All those seeking to advance the fight against injustice and exploitation are welcome to attend and participate in these discussions on issues of importance to working people.

At the Militant Labor Forum you can express your opinion, listen to the views of fellow fighters, and exchange ideas on how best to advance the interests of workers and farmers the world over.

## FLORIDA

### Miami

**Turmoil in Mexico, Eyewitness Report from Chiapas and Mexico.** Speaker: Miguel Zárate, recently returned from a reporting trip for the *Militant*. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. Reception: 6:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. (between NE 1st Ave. and NE 2nd Ave.). Donation: \$5. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Boston

**Affirmative Action Under Attack: How and**

**Why It Must Be Defended.** Speaker: Maceo Dixon, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

## MINNESOTA

### St. Paul

**The Crisis in Mexico.** Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Ave. (East side of Hwy. 280, on 16A bus line). Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Philadelphia

**Affirmative Action: Why All Workers Must Defend It.** Fri., April 14, 7:30 p.m.

**Why All Workers Should Oppose Welfare Cuts.** Sat., April 22, 7:30 p.m.

**Ireland Today.** Sat., April 29, 7:30 p.m. All events at 1906 South St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

### Pittsburgh

**Protest Offensive on Health, Education, and Welfare.** Speaker: Jack Willey, National Committee member of Young Socialists. Sat., April

15, 7 p.m. 1103 E. Carson St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

## UTAH

### Salt Lake City

**A Report-back by Participants in the April 9 National Rally for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C.** Speakers: Pam Mazaheri, National Organization for Women; Tami Peterson, Socialist Workers Party; Joellyn Manville, Young Socialists. Fri., April 14, 7 p.m. 147 E 900 South. Donation: \$3. Dinner: \$5. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

## BRITAIN

### London

**Why Is Mark Curtis Still In Prison?** Sat., April 15, 6 p.m. 47 The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 071-928 7993.

### Manchester

**Launch Meeting for the Communist League 1995 Election Campaign: An Action Program for Working People Today.** Sat., April 15, 6 p.m. 1st Floor, 60 Shudehill. Tel: (0161) 839 1766.

# Unions, students hit attacks on social gains

Continued from front page

measures like Proposition 187, recently passed in California.

"Proposition 187 is not fair," said King Tsui, director of the Community Services Division of the Chinese American Planning Council, who joined the protest. Tsui said the scapegoating of immigrant workers is increasing because of the current crisis in the economy. "Attacks on immigrant workers are a product of the atmosphere created by the political climate," Tsui re-

marked. "These cuts are going to create more social problems."

Although the action was aimed at reversing the direction of politicians in Albany and New York City who are proposing to slash jobs and programs that benefit working people, many at the march were concerned about moves in Congress to cut federal programs that aid the lowest paid workers and proposals to curtail universal entitlements like Social Security.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a welfare bill March 24 that, if enacted, would cut off benefits to many immigrant workers who are not citizens. That bill prohibits most legal immigrants from receiving benefits from the five largest federal-aid programs: Medicaid, food stamps, disability, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and Title XX social service programs for the elderly and disabled.

Meanwhile, Pataki has proposed plans that would slash \$16.8 million from mental health and homelessness programs and reduce the number of state hospital beds by 10 percent. The governor, who accused those criticizing the cuts of "fear mongering," said students should be thankful since his slashing of education programs would "give them a chance to get a job in New York."

New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani announced April 3 proposals for deeper cuts, including \$11 million from the sanitation department, \$4 million from the fire department, and \$80 million from

the board of education. Giuliani also proposed eliminating \$1.2 billion from welfare and Medicaid.

Luis Miranda, appointed by Giuliani as chairman of New York City's Health and Hospitals Corporation, resigned March 23, citing differences with the mayor on cuts in Medicaid. Miranda, president of the Hispanic Federation of New York, a coalition of health and social service agencies in the Latino community, said he generally supported Giuliani's goals and had stood by the mayor in eliminating over 4,000 health-care jobs. However, he chastised the mayor for going too far.

"The rich don't like poor people," said Jean Eddy a Haitian student from Dekalb High School in Brooklyn who marched on April 4. "These budget cuts are for the rich."

Eddy said he came to the United States because "I was forced to, since my country was destroyed by the U.S. government."

Protests against social service, education, and job cuts continue in New York City and in the state capital. A protest to defend programs for the disabled called by New York State senator David Paterson was held in Albany on April 5. Further demonstrations by union members and students are planned.

Abraham de la Cruz, a Dominican student at the April 4 rally, said more protests were needed, including "strikes by transportation and hospital workers to shut the city down."

# CALENDAR

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Boston

**Inside Cuba Today: A Young Cuban Talks About Her Country.** Speaker: Kenia Serrano, Cuban youth activist from the Center of Studies for Youth. Wed., April 12, 7 p.m. Sponsored by Caribbean Focus Program and the July 26 Coalition.

**Cuban Reality Program at Roxbury Community College Presents: Cubans in the United States.** Wed., April 19, 6 p.m. Speaker: Andrés Gómez.

**Talks on Life in Cuba Since the Collapse of the Soviet Union.** Wed., April 26, 6 p.m. Speakers: Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* and *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*; Richard Levins; and a representative from the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. All events held at Roxbury Community College, Student Center, Room 102, 1234 Columbus Ave. For more information, call: (617) 427-0060 X5151.

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Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New Internationalist*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, and *Nueva Internacional*.

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**CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles:** 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460, 380-9640. Compuserve: 74642,326. Internet: 74642.326@compuserve.com **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 285-5323. Compuserve: 75604,556.

**CONNECTICUT: New Haven:** Mailing address: P.O. Box 16751, Baybrook Station, West Haven. Zip: 06516.

**FLORIDA: Miami:** 137 N.E. 54th St. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

**GEORGIA: Atlanta:** 803 Peachtree NE. Zip: 30308. Tel: (404) 724-9759.

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**MASSACHUSETTS: Boston:** 780 Tremont St. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

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**Montreal:** 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369.

**Toronto:** 827 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M1. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

**Vancouver:** 3967 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3P3. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

## FRANCE

**Paris:** MBE 201, 208 rue de la Convention. Postal code: 750175. Tel: (1) 47-26-58-21.

## ICELAND

**Reykjavik:** Klappartíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502.

## NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland:** La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

**Christchurch:** 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

## SWEDEN

**Stockholm:** Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.



**The 'color-blind' society** — "African Americans in Los Angeles County are only about 60 percent as likely as whites to undergo heart bypass surgeries and, along with Latinos and Asian Ameri-



Harry Ring

cans, trail white patients in obtaining other life-saving heart procedures." — News item.

**Can't waste a minute** — The big phone companies are competing for control of the estimated 50,000 pay phones in the coun-

try's prisons. Returns are lucrative because inmates tend to talk longer than average pay phone users, and they can only call collect, one of the most costly services. Squeezing out that extra drop, most prison phones won't connect users with toll-free numbers.

**No, but an admission of frame-up would be good** — A letter-writer to the *Los Angeles Times* fumes because former Communist Party leader Angela Davis has been given a post at UCLA. He wails: "What could be next, a national monument for the Rosenbergs?" Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were electrocuted by the U.S. government in 1953 on trumped-up charges of atomic

spying for the USSR.

**Sounds like straight capitalism** — A group of Allstate insurance agents filed a complaint charging they were intimidated and wrongfully fired as a result of a training program led by a Scientology rep. One news account said employees were taught "to disregard ethics in the quest for greater productivity."

**Besides patriotic, they should be honest** — A Wall Street broker's newsletter advised that recent elections signaled "a return to America's traditional beliefs in individual effort and responsibility." It pointed to the reported increased sales of the Celex Group, which retails decorative items promoting said beliefs. But, the letter sadly

said, Celex then reported a sharp drop in Xmas sales. It adds: "Dismayed by an apparent lack of candor in the company's statements, we sold the stock (at a sizable loss)."

**Some lives even cheaper than others** — To gauge the social costs of climate changes, a UN economist reportedly determined the "net present value of lost future output." (How much we'd produce if we were alive instead of dead.) He calculated that a U.S. citizen's life is worth \$1.5 million, 10 times more than the life of a South American.

**Must have a safety net** — A *Los Angeles Times* article highlighted a contradiction. Despite the fact that California has been

hard hit by recession, "a stubborn pocket of affluence persists." For instance, the country's biggest Rolls Royce dealer, in Beverly Hills, sold 30 of the big-ticket jalopies last year.

**Good for city driving** — Speaking of the Rolls Royce, check out the company's Bentley. Compared to the Ferrari, which will hit over 200 mph, the Bentley lumbers along at a max of 150. But it's \$500,000 for a Ferrari and a Bentley is yours for \$367,000.

**Safer than the one down the street** — Hammacher-Schlemmer, the gadget company, is offering a mechanical baseball bat, \$4,000. Or, for penny-pinchers, a replica for \$39.95.

## Fannie Curran: 70 years of communist work

BY MAREA HIMELGRIN

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — More than 40 people, from youth in their early 20s to men and women in their 70s, gathered at the Pathfinder bookstore here March 26 to celebrate the life of Fannie Curran and her seven decades of commitment to building the communist movement. Curran recently died at the age of 85.

She was part of the generation of young people in the 1920s who were deeply inspired by the moral and political example of the October 1917 revolution. The sweeping changes made possible by the workers and peasants in the former tsarist empire — where Fannie was born and from where she had emigrated only a few years earlier — convinced millions of youth around the world of the Bolshevik road. Curran, like many others, was persuaded that only if the most far-sighted and class-conscious part of the working class joined together in a communist party, as the Bolsheviks led by V.I. Lenin had done in Russia, could working people in other countries overturn the political rule of the handful of capitalist families and eliminate the exploitation, oppression, anti-Semitism, and all forms of reaction endemic in propertied society.

Curran joined the Young Communist League in Minneapolis in 1924 as a high school student. She was expelled by Stalinists in 1928 for continuing to defend communist principles. Curran was then active in the Communist League of America and helped support the 1934 Teamster strikes in Minneapolis. She was a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938 and remained a supporter and contributor to the SWP until she died.

"Fannie in many ways was just an ordinary person. She was not a celebrity — she was poor, a worker, and an immigrant from the Ukraine," Doug Jenness, a member of the SWP, said in welcoming family and friends to the meeting. "But at the same time she was a remarkable person. She became part of that section of the working class that is more far-sighted and more clear about the class nature of society — a communist — and she held steadfast in the fight for working class emancipation for over 70 years."

### Influence of Cuba on new generation

Also speaking at the meeting was Lisa Rottach, a member of the Young Socialists. Rottach, who recently returned from her third trip to Cuba, compared the influence of the Cuban revolution for her generation to the influence of the Russian revolution on Curran's.

Rottach related a story from Curran's correspondence about her early life: "She was trying to read *Capital* at the bookstore, when Carl Skoglund, a founding member of the communist movement in the United States, asked her, 'Little one, what are you reading?' Fannie replied, 'I'm reading Marx because he knows what caused all the hardship in this world.' Skoglund told her, '*Capital* is too much to start with, and brought her the pamphlets, *Wage-Labor and Capital* and *Value, Price and Profit*. Fannie was proud to still have one of the pamphlets Skoglund had given her seven decades later in her library."

Jenness explained that in the early 1930's, when Curran was still in her 20s,



Fannie Curran, second from left, at 1970s march for the Equal Rights Amendment in Washington, D.C. Curran's daughter Jean is at left, husband Bill Curran at right.

she went through one of the richest political experiences of the workers' movement in this country — the 1934 Minneapolis Teamster strikes.

Another founding member of the SWP, Charles Scheer, spoke at the meeting. Retired, after working 34 years on the railroad, Scheer is an active member of the Minneapolis/St. Paul SWP branch. He told the meeting that when Curran joined the Young Communist League in 1924, the organization was already becoming Stalinized. One sign of this was that they organized no classes where youth could openly discuss and debate communist ideas. "Fannie took a dim view of this," he said.

"Up to the end," Scheer continued, "Fannie retained the interests of her youth." He and his wife Helen regularly visited Curran in the last years of her life. "We always had a good discussion, going over old times and hot topics in politics today."

"When Fannie's health began to fail, she had a house cleaner come in, but Fannie always thought it was more important to discuss politics with the young woman, then let her clean house. She sold a *Militant* subscription to the man who drove the van that picked her up for doctor's visits. Even in the nursing home, Fannie was always working to help the help. You could see how fond they were of her at a memorial meeting organized by Fannie's daughter Jean at the home on March 19."

SWP Political Committee members Jack Barnes, Joel Britton, and Mary-Alice Waters, who had known Curran and her husband Bill, sent a message to the meeting stating, "Fannie was part of the long-time working-class cadre from Minneapolis-St. Paul who were not only still around when we were won to the Socialist Workers Party, but were still setting an example as party cadres. Fannie, like other Twin Cities veterans, had a direct and lasting effect on our political lives, our values, and our entire life direction from the time we first joined the communist movement...."

"In late 1990 as the U.S. capitalist rulers began their murderous bombing opera-

tions and ground invasion of Iraq, communist youth in the United States and other countries launched a working-class campaign against imperialism and war. Our movement summed up the lessons of this campaign in 'The Opening Guns of World War III,' published in *New International*.

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

### THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People  
April 17, 1970 Price 10¢

ATLANTA, April 8 — As nearly 1,000 striking city employees and their supporters marched through the streets of Atlanta on Saturday afternoon, April 4, a shot rang out. A scab working on one of the city's sanitation trucks had wounded Fred Simmons, a union picket captain, in the back of the thigh. When angry strikers climbed onto the truck to disarm the scab the city cops violently beat up a number of them.

The strike is now in its fourth week. Although the newspapers are filled with rumors about the strike's loss of strength, the workers are still holding fast against savage attempts by the city administration headed by liberal Democratic Mayor Sam Massell to break the strike.

The majority of the striking workers are Black and work for the city sanitation department. They are demanding an immediate one-step wage increase.

Since Saturday, marches and rallies have been a daily event. The marches and rallies are being organized by a support group called the Coalition of Concerned Citizens.

The AFL-CIO nationally has also declared its complete support for the striking workers. And support activity is being organized on Black campuses as well as at Emory University and Georgia State University.

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE  
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

### April 21, 1945

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio, April 14 — The Republic Steel Corporation by its policy of racial discrimination precipitated a walkout of 28 women in the Youngstown Bessemer plant on April 2nd. "The women, most of them crane operators, left their jobs in protest against sharing the same dressing room with Negro women, who were employed in the plant for the first time since women have worked in the steel industry. Prior to the walkout, known company stooges were stirring up the racial prejudices of the white women. At the same time they were playing on the backward sentiments of the men in regard to the "special" category in which they place the women as separate and apart from them as workers.

The local union of the Bessemer plant is known for its militancy. With this bit of Jim Crow provocation, the company hopes to weaken the union. The Republic Steel Corporation knows full well and plays upon the prejudices of the workers. On the one hand stirring up racial trouble, and on the other setting the women — themselves a minority — in a separate category. This must be recognized and fought against by the union members. The task now is for the Negro women together with the local to fight discrimination. With the CIO in the district backing up the fight for equality, this attempt by management to weaken the union can be repulsed.



## Women's rights fight

Continued from front page

help maintain their profit system. Programs that benefit the working class are the target of every government body today, as capitalist politicians try to safeguard the investments of the wealthy at our expense.

Working people are being forced to compete more aggressively for scarce and worse paying jobs. The attacks on immigrants and affirmative action are aimed at dividing us and making it easier for the rulers to impose a lower standard of living on the great majority.

The trumpet being sounded by the likes of Newt Gingrich and proponents of the "Contract with America" is simply a louder version of a tune that politicians from both parties have been playing for some time. They want us to blame immigrants, women on welfare, single mothers, and unemployed workers, instead of fighting for policies that would guarantee jobs, decent wages, child care, and equal rights for all.

As both big-business parties move to the right and the offensive against wages and working conditions continues, the gap grows between the working class and the wealthy few.

But the capacity of women to fight for their rights is an obstacle to imposing the type of intolerable conditions on the working class they need to shift the burden of their economic crisis onto our shoulders.

In spite of the unrelenting assault on women's rights the rulers have not been able to reverse major gains such as legal abortion. In fact, there are signs that right-wing forces who have tried to shut down abortion clinics and lead the assault on women's rights are more fractured. Many of those groups have less ability to mobilize the numbers they did only a few years ago; and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church has had to distance itself from some of the most outrageous acts like the murders of clinic workers in Boston.

Politicians, like Republican Pete Wilson of California, who have led the charge in attacking immigrants and affirmative action, are less sanguine about taking on abortion rights in the face of the overwhelming sentiment to

keep it safe and legal and the continued mobilizations to defend the clinics and meet rightist attacks.

Supporters of women's rights can be encouraged by the response of thousands, especially young people, to the attacks on the clinics. Resistance that has taken shape around proposed cuts on education and social welfare programs, and protests that are being organized against anti-immigrant laws similarly point to the fact that working people and youth can confront this drive. The women's rights struggle, like the battle to oppose anti-immigrant assaults, is a part of the working class fight for unity. They are part of strengthening the hand of working people against the attacks on social entitlements, jobs, and democratic rights for all.

It is important to raise demands that go to the heart of the assaults on women, Blacks, other oppressed nationalities, and working people as a whole. We need demands that can help unite the working class and protect us from the ravages of the economic crisis.

- Keep abortion safe and legal
- Defend affirmative action
- 'No' to the bipartisan assault on women's rights, unions, and the social wage
- Jobs for all — 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay
- Defend the rights of immigrant workers — For a world without borders

Defending women's rights is part of the fight by working people for basic human dignity, and it is the same the world over. This is what lies behind the massive outpouring of working-class protest at the hanging of a Filipina by the repressive Singapore regime. Something that was for so many years considered normal — that tens of thousands of working people, especially women, could be shipped off as servants and maids for the wealthy and must accept whatever conditions and treatment is meted out to them — has been challenged.

The fights we are seeing today, from women defending the clinics, to those marching in Mexico are examples of the road to defend our rights in a world where learning how to fight effectively is a growing necessity.

## Guatemala: the truth seeps out

As the truth seeps out about Washington's intimate involvement in — and direction of — the Guatemalan murder machine, the White House and Congress are squirming. The admission that a high-ranking Guatemalan colonel in the CIA's employ supervised the torture and murder of a Guatemalan guerrilla leader and the execution of a U.S.-born innkeeper has exposed a tiny thread of the official web of secrecy, lies, and terror Washington uses to advance capitalist interests. It is one more confirmation of the totalitarian core that lies at the heart of all U.S. policy — domestic and foreign.

A feature article in the April 17 *Nation* magazine reports: "The U.S. government has systematic links to Guatemalan Army death squad operations that go far beyond the disclosures that have recently shaken official Washington... as U.S. officials well know."

On "Face the Nation" April 2, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said no CIA money was going to Guatemala. The next day, the White House was forced to admit that the money was still flowing, and assured that the bulk of the payments will be suspended shortly. The Bush administration claimed it had cut off military aid to the Guatemalan regime in 1990. It didn't.

As is standard operating procedure when Washington

gets caught red-handed, the CIA is being portrayed as an out-of-control outfit, guilty of "abuse of secrecy," according to the *New York Times* editors.

The CIA, however, has always carried out bipartisan policy to divert or crush popular revolutions or regimes that don't bow to U.S. dictates. That is why the Pentagon has historically taken a direct hand in training most of the top bourgeois officer corps in the Americas. The Army School of the Americas has produced — not just the CIA's man in Guatemala. "Out of 59,000 students who have graduated from a variety of programs, less than 300 have been cited for human rights violations like torture and murder, and less than 50 have been convicted of anything," reports a proud Maj. Gordon Martel, speaking for the school.

The horrors of Washington's policy in Guatemala are simply an extension of domestic policy, in which the U.S. government and its police agencies organize to spy on, disrupt, and sometimes murder their opponents at home. The reason for the veil of secrecy and consistent denials from Washington is that the U.S. rulers cannot afford to carry out their dirty operations in public. The labor movement should demand that the government open all of its files on Guatemala for public inspection.

## Iran, Iraq anger Washington

Washington has been revving up its campaign against the governments of Iran and Iraq in recent weeks. On April 4 President Bill Clinton held a joint news conference with British prime minister John Major declaring his intention to maintain strict sanctions against Baghdad. White House officials argued in a recent cabinet meeting for a near-total trade ban against Tehran as well. Calling the two governments "rogue states," Washington seeks to isolate them as a way to strengthen the hand of U.S. capital in the region.

But the U.S. imperialists have a problem. A recent article in the *New York Times* noted that "16 years after the Iranian revolution and more than four years after" Uncle Sam's criminal slaughter against the Iraqi people in the Persian Gulf war, the U.S. government is "incapable of controlling...the unacceptable behavior" of both regimes.

Washington's main imperialist competitors in Europe and Japan lack enthusiasm for a trade ban. Japan is Iran's largest customer for crude oil and, according to the *Times*, Tokyo has informed Washington of its unwillingness to participate in a campaign to isolate Tehran economically.

When Clinton axed a deal to sell Boeing 747s to Iran last year, the Iranian regime bought European Airbus planes. After Washington nixed a Conoco-Iran oil agree-

ment on March 15, an analyst with the Paris office of Cambridge Energy Research Associates declared Iran "fair game" for non-U.S. oil and gas companies.

Paris and Bonn make no secret of their desire to get in on some oil deals with Baghdad as well. Meanwhile, Moscow is pursuing the sale of two nuclear reactors to the Iranian government despite the shrill complaints of Washington.

Washington, the biggest owner of nuclear bombs and the only government to ever use them, cynically accuses Tehran of having a crash nuclear arms program and charges Baghdad with developing biological weapons. This bluster doesn't change the truth about the U.S. government's criminal role in the region, however, from aiding the Iraqi regime in its bloody war against Iran in the 1980s, to the Gulf war massacre, to Clinton's tacit support for the Turkish government's war against the Kurdish people in northern Iraq and Turkey today.

Working people should oppose Washington's war moves against Iran and Iraq. It is the U.S. government that is the "rogue state" run by "international outlaws" — the bipartisan gang of Democrats and Republicans who are the chief perpetrators of "mass destruction" as they demonstrated in the Persian Gulf and continue to show with the refusal to lift the criminal embargo against Iraq.

## South Africa

Continued from Page 3

March 13, providing for wage increases for 170,000 workers in the auto services and retail industry. Some 43,000 gas station workers under the agreement will receive a 13 percent wage increase, and a discriminatory pension fund is to be phased out to bring black workers on par with their white counterparts.

Some 500 delegates attended the Central Committee meeting of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), held in mid-March in Pretoria. The delegates, representing more than 327,000 miners, set out the union's priorities in negotiations this year with the mining houses.

These center on narrowing the wage gap between different job categories — and white and black miners. The union also wants contract workers brought into the union at equal pay and progress registered on abolition of the hostel system.

The government recently decided that thousands of black mineworkers previously denied access to blasting certificates will now be able to qualify for the documentation. This will significantly increase the control miners can exercise over safety underground. Blasting papers were previously reserved for whites only.

The NUM decided it would push for a basic wage of about \$333 per month for surface workers and \$368 for underground workers. The current minimum is about \$83 a month. The union also called on the government to grant permanent residence to all migrant workers who have lived in South Africa since 1986, enabling them to vote in the local government elections. A declaration said the NUM would continue "to pursue discussions with other trade unions, political parties, employers and other interested parties on the issue of contributing towards the RDP by working certain public holidays."

NUM president James Motlatsi also broached the subject of nationalization of selected mines. "Though the government is looking at privatization of some state assets, the government must also be alive to the assets that need to be nationalized for the benefit of all citizens," he said. Referring to the management of Gold Fields of South Africa, who he called "super-racists," Motlatsi argued, "I urge the government to look at [Gold Fields'] Kloof and West Driefontein as a starting point, and we are ready to assist the government with a way forward to nationalizing," he said, according to a South African Press Association release.

In its declaration, the union also called on the South African government to establish preferential trade status with Cuba. "We salute the valiant people of Cuba and pledge unqualified support for their struggle against the illegal occupation and economic blockade of Cuba by the United States of America."

## Fannie Curran

Continued from Page 13

perspective is not only worth fighting for, but is the only way forward for humanity. Her life stands as a model for young people today who are morally outraged by the evils and abuses of capitalism and want to join with others in building an effective political instrument to overturn and replace that system of human exploitation, environmental despoliation, and war."

The final speaker at the meeting, Leah Finger, a member of the SWP and the United Auto Workers union, explained that she had the opportunity to visit with Curran several times in the late 1980s. As branch financial director, Finger had wanted to meet the woman living on a meager Social Security income who mailed a monthly donation of \$50 to the SWP and regularly contributed to other funds.

Finger also related several stories of how Curran led a successful unionization drive during the depression among other young women who worked as clerks at Sears, including a struggle to be able to wear pants, which management condemned as "undignified clothing."

Curran loved to study and was always pressing books on others. "If this meeting inspires us to go pick up a book and set aside some time in our hectic lives to study, that would have pleased Fannie very much," Finger concluded by saying.

Jenness closed the meeting by talking about Curran's life-long commitment to defending the victim's of capitalist injustice. "When Mark Curtis was framed up, convicted, and jailed on phony rape charges, Fannie immediately embraced his case," he noted.

"In addition to her monthly contribution of \$50 to the SWP, she started sending \$20 a month to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. When the committee appealed for more funds, Fannie quit smoking, partly for health reasons, but also so that she could increase her contribution to \$30 a month and continue to also give to the Militant Prisoner Fund, the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, and other causes."

A collection taken at the meeting to help finance the publication of the Pathfinder pamphlet *Why is Mark Curtis still in Prison? The Political Frame-up of a Unionist and Socialist and the Campaign to Free Him* netted \$600.

Marea Himelgrin is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 9198 in Roseville, Minnesota.



# Auto workers strike General Motors, Chrysler

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or

which makes them vulnerable to future layoffs and transfers.

This is the seventh strike against GM in 15 months over questions of job security, forced overtime, and health and safety conditions on the job.

In Kokomo, 5,700 members of UAW Local 685 struck Chrysler's only transmission factory. The workers want the company's commitment that it will produce its new generation truck transmission

fight at the Greensboro distribution center. "When we got back and started explaining how these strikers, on the picket lines for 10 months, really identified with us, people's eyes began to light up," said Robinson.

The Kmart workers brought back a few dozen UAW strike buttons that union members are now wearing alongside ACTWU "Union Yes" buttons. Kmart workers like the saying, "We are staying stronger for one day longer."

"The trip was well worth it," Robinson said. "It boosted my moral. The Cat strikers are really like us. They have decided to draw the line and they are sticking to it."



Striking auto workers picket General Motors truck assembly plant in Pontiac, Michigan. Some 5,500 workers walked out March 31.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Some 11,200 United Auto Workers (UAW) union members in Kokomo, Indiana, and Pontiac, Michigan, struck March 31 to protect jobs in the face of continued downsizing by the Big Three—General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler.

In Pontiac, a city devastated by GM plant closings, 5,000 members of UAW Local 594 struck the Pontiac East truck assembly plant and nearby engineering operations. About one-third of the corporation's best-selling vehicle, its full size pickup truck, is built there.

The workers walked out to protect 1,500 union members threatened with forced transfers. The union is demanding that the company add jobs in Pontiac for workers whose jobs were eliminated when the West assembly plant closed last year.

Over the last 10 years 60,000 GM workers, about a quarter of the present union membership, have been forced to take jobs more than 300 miles from their home plants.

GM claims that the 1,500 displaced workers would stay within 50 miles of Pontiac. The company said they will be sent to places like Flint, where workers have forced GM—through strike action last year—to bring in new workers and relieve job overloads. But the displaced workers would enter these plants with little seniority,

there. The company settled the Kokomo strike in nine hours.

The Kokomo workers had the company backed into a corner. They produce 90 percent of all automatic transmissions used in Chrysler products, and because of just-in-time supply systems, the strike would have rapidly forced the closing of many assembly plants. This was the first UAW strike against Chrysler in over a decade.

### Kmart workers: staying stronger one day longer

"Some of us just needed to take the initiative and go," said Kevin Robinson, a member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) Local 2603. Robinson was talking about a recent trip three workers from Kmart in Greensboro, North Carolina, made to the United Auto Workers (UAW) strike against Caterpillar in Peoria, Illinois.

A dozen co-workers at the Kmart distribution center collected money to support the trip, as well as gathered buttons and hats to exchange with Caterpillar strikers.

Last November, workers at the Kmart distribution center walked out for one week as part of the year-and-a-half-long fight workers there have been waging for their first contract.

When some union members first started talking about making the trip to Peoria many co-workers were supportive, but were not sure it had any practical benefit for the

### Stevedores walk out in Auckland, New Zealand

Eighty-seven members of the Waterside Workers Union set up picket lines at the Auckland wharves March 20. The pickets struck their employer, Waitemata Stevedoring Services Ltd., in a fight to renew their collective employment contract with the company.

At issue, striking watersiders told the *Militant* during a visit to the picket line, is the company's effort to expand its use of casual labor in place of full-time workers. Currently, up to 60 or 70 casual workers are hired to work alongside the 87 permanent employees contracted to Waitemata Stevedoring to load and unload ships. The casual workers are not covered by the union contract and are paid only when work is available for them.

Since the strike began, ships usually worked by Waitemata Stevedoring have been diverted to other ports.

The union issued a call for other watersiders not to carry out

work normally done by the strikers.

Previously, watersiders were hired through a centralized authority at each port and were covered by a national contract. Now, as a result of government "market reforms," individual stevedoring companies hire workers under their own terms, facilitating attacks on working conditions and wages.

Through their strike, the pickets said, they were hoping to pressure the company to settle a new collective contract or take it to arbitration. The unionists returned to work March 27 when negotiations resumed.

### Union, community rally hits school privatization

Two hundred fifty people turned out March 21, to protest a plan by the Wilkesburg School Board to privatize Turner Elementary School in Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh.

"There is no room for profits in education," said Barbara Bell, a negotiator for the Wilkesburg Educational Association (WEA) whose members' jobs are threat-

ened by the privatization.

The plan, which was approved by the school board, will turn over the school to a corporation, Alternative Public Schools Inc. The company would hire its own staff, throwing current employees out of work. The school board held open the possibility of reaching an agreement with the WEA if the workers would agree to concessions, including a longer workday, longer school year with no pay increase, and greater flexibility in firing and disciplining teachers.

"This is much deeper than it seems on the surface," said Oliver Montgomery, president of the Penn Hills NAACP and vice president of the Allegheny Central Labor Council. "This is part of the corporate strategy to bust unions," he said.

*Contributors to this week's column include: John Sarge, a member of the UAW in Detroit; Joan Paltrineri, a member of ACTWU Local 2603 in Greensboro; Russell Johnson from Auckland, New Zealand; and Bill Scheer, a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 1557 in Pittsburgh.*

## LETTERS

### Class prejudice

In mid-March the *Wall Street Journal* theater critic, Donald Lyons, reviewed a new book entitled *Paris Babylon: The Story of the Paris Commune* by Rupert Christiansen. The reviewer's contempt for the commune is clearly shown with just some of the following comments:

"A rigged electorate (no bourgeois votes) chose a radical municipal body..." "A mixed leaderless bunch, the Commune was soon dominated by extremists hot to inaugurate utopia by murdering priests, and abolishing property." "The 1960s adored the Commune, the 1990s should know better."

I was glad to see the article on the Paris Commune in the March 27, 1995, issue of the *Militant*. The first experiment in workers running a government may have had its problems but its real history gives a glimpse as to what potential working people have to run society. I would encourage readers to read Marx and Engels on the Paris Commune so we can educate ourselves on our working-class heritage and to prepare for similar battles in the future.

Edwin Fruit  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

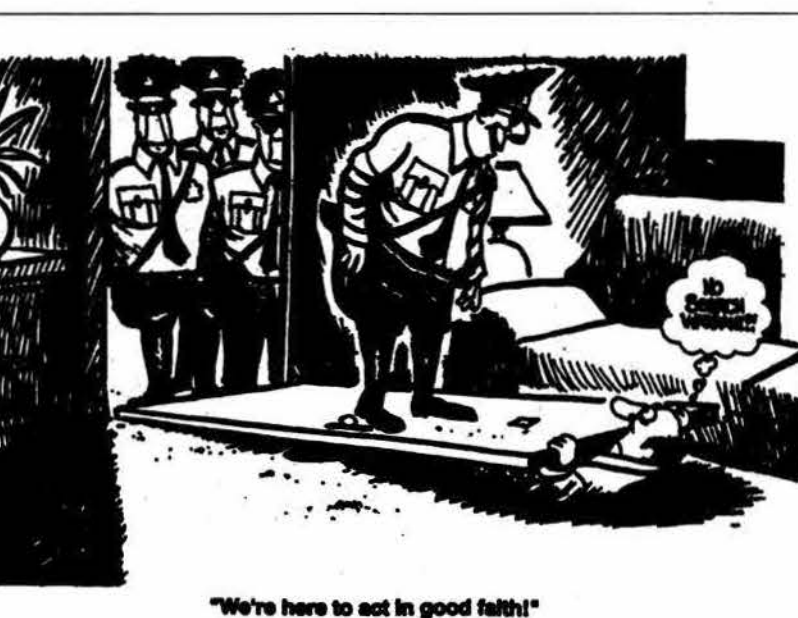
### Gave us strength

During the UN conference in

Copenhagen, four YS members from Sweden were there to listen to Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela.

Unfortunately Nelson Mandela was not able to be there, Fidel Castro made up for the lack of him in an incredible way. There were a lot of Latin Americans at the meeting and they had a great deal to say about the Cuban revolution and also about the South African revolution. They all had strong feelings towards Fidel Castro and they all focused on how much Castro had meant and still means to all Latin American countries. Most of the Danish people had more interest in Nelson Mandela. Our opinion is that they got their picture of Cuba from the press.

We just want to mention that we ourselves never realized he was such a good speaker. He made fun of the whole conference in a way that made people listen, laugh, and agree with him. He blamed capitalism for starvation, poverty, and for using the poor countries in order to increase the profit in the rich countries. He also explained the situation in Cuba in a voice that seemed to speak for the whole population. The trip to Copenhagen really



gave us strength and willpower to continue the struggle for better conditions and a socialistic alternative.

Sassa Norman  
Paula Nygren  
Stockholm, Sweden

### Failed to consider workers

I had to comment on the recent back-to-work legislation enacted by the Liberal government in Canada. The government failed to consider the true position of the working man, as usual, and came

to the rescue of the corporations again, as usual. It can only be characterized as unfortunate that the big-business media chose to highlight the one issue that they knew would most effectively inflame farmers against the workers, that being the guaranteed wage clause.

I think it's time for more people to know that in Canada, the railroads are usually a pork barrel for the party faithful and the spending fiascoes perpetrated by these managers have been legendary. Most notable of these is Via Rail. The

patronage was so extreme that Stevie Cameron documented it in her recent book on the Mulroney years. Canadian National can be little different.

The largest shame these "shepherds of the industry" have created lately is the expensive new television advertising campaign that we are seeing on the Western Canadian channels. I wonder how many poor men working the "section" are going to be out a job to pay for that one? I also wonder how long till the next train wreck if all the maintenance men are laid off?

If you live close to a main line or an arterial route, check the cars to see what they are hauling and then "Holler like Hell" to your representative about your safety. And your children's.

Tim Bettger  
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.



## Singapore execution sparks protests

BY GREG ROSENBERG

A wave of class outrage swept the Philippines in response to the execution of Flor Contemplacion, a Filipino maid hanged to death by the government of Singapore March 17.

The Philippines is the world's largest exporter of human labor. Millions of working people are angered by the often brutal conditions, low wages, and insulting treatment meted out by their employers — at home and abroad. The Filipino government and ruling class sought to channel this mass outpouring — much of it directed at them and fueled by an economic crisis — into a patriotic parade.

The Singapore government refused to delay the execution despite new testimony suggesting Contemplacion had been framed for the 1991 deaths of another Filipino maid and a four-year-old Singaporean boy. Singapore's hangmen killed 32 people last year, and there are currently 60 Filipinos in jail there.

Contemplacion's March 26 funeral in San Pablo, southeast of the capital, turned into an angry demonstration against the execution and Manila's indifference to the plight of millions of migrant workers.

"More than 40 percent of Filipinos are either unemployed or underemployed," said Amante Jimenez, chairperson of the League of Filipino Students, in a telephone interview from Manila. "The program of the Ramos government — called Philippines 2000 — has resulted in many layoffs and is driving peasants off the land to look for work. The execution of Contemplacion became a rallying point to protest this situation, and the government policy of exporting labor."

Jimenez reported that 30,000 people daily attended Contemplacion's wake, with more than 50,000 turning out for the funeral. "People in the wake were mostly of peasant origin, as was Contemplacion herself," said Jimenez. "And workers from the export zones south of Manila joined



Cops pass by Filipino workers in Singapore park two days after execution of Contemplacion. Government vowed to break up any protests organized in Singapore.

demonstrations," along with some outraged middle-class Filipinos.

In Davao, on the island of Mindanao, 1,000 city workers turned out for a protest where the mayor burned the Singapore flag and called for a boycott of its goods. The Singapore government demanded those burning its flags be "brought to justice." In Singapore, where it is illegal for workers who are not citizens to take part in political activity, cops vowed to break up a public protest-prayer planned by Filipinos.

Capitalist politicians in the Philippines, facing congressional elections in May and alarmed by the outpouring, attempted to divert protests into a nationalist outcry. Philippine president Fidel Ramos, who had requested a stay of execution, called Contemplacion a martyr, then canceled a visit by Singapore's prime minister scheduled for April. Ramos recalled envoys from six other countries, ostensibly to discuss measures to protect Filipinos abroad.

In this turn of events, even Bong Bong Marcos, son of the former dictator Ferdinand Marcos, postured on behalf of migrant workers.

The publisher of the *Philippine Star* wrote that "Singaporeans still in our vicinity [should] run for their lives... We could smother those sassy pygmies by sheer weight of numbers." The *Straits Times* of Singapore expressed incredulity over the outrage in the Philippines, terming it "mob logic."

Manila began organizing the export of labor under the Marcos dictatorship in 1974 to earn hard currency and alleviate unemployment pressures. Today, out of a population of 70 million, between 3.5 million and 6.5 million Filipinos work overseas — 55 percent of them women — sending up to \$6 billion home annually. This is Manila's biggest source of foreign currency. There are 75,000 Filipino workers in Singapore alone; 150,000 in Hong Kong; 105,500 in Kuwait; 100,000 in

Japan; 1.3 million in Saudi Arabia; and up to 1.5 million in the United States. During the Persian Gulf war, nearly 6,000 Filipinos were stranded in Iraq and Kuwait, with no government or agency willing to foot the bill for their return home.

These workers are paid low wages — albeit often higher than wages they would receive in the Philippines — work long hours, are victimized for attempts to organize unions, harassed and jailed by local authorities, and subjected to daily humiliations. Throughout Southeast Asia, Filipino women work as low-wage servants raising the children of bourgeois families. Tens of thousands are forced into prostitution.

Washington held the Philippines as a colonial possession until World War II. It smashed the Huk rebellion, which first fought Japanese imperialism and then demanded independence, and installed a series of subservient regimes after formal independence was granted. The U.S. rulers placed two of their largest military bases on Philippine soil — Clark and Subic — and organized massive sex slavery to serve its troops stationed there. These bases were finally shut down after growing popular protests in 1992.

Imperialist domination of the Philippines, and the rule of local capitalists, has placed tens of millions of workers and peasants in stark poverty.

The *New York Times* printed a letter in its March 25 issue by a Filipino reader living in California. She wrote that elite Filipinos claiming indignation over the Contemplacion execution "treat their own women servants like animals and actually call them 'hayup' (the Tagalog word for 'animal')... It is easy to rouse anger about foreign injustice when it is done in a police state like Singapore. Almost anyone could be outraged. But it is much more difficult to talk about what is being erased — the question of class. This is part of a pattern woven into a fabric of exploitative labor and daily humiliation."

## Hundreds rally for Maori land rights

BY TERRY COGGAN

WANGANUI, New Zealand—"Wanganui has become the focus of politics and economics in this country," Bill Emery told an 80-strong group of supporters of Maori rights before they boarded buses for the eight-hour journey from Auckland to the site of a land occupation in this city.

The contingent joined hundreds of defenders of Maori land rights from all over New Zealand who converged on Wanganui March 30. An eviction notice served on the occupation by the Wanganui District Council was due to expire. Hundreds took part in demonstrations in Auckland, Christchurch, and Wellington to support the land occupation during the week. Up to 200 Maoris and supporters began occupying Moutoa Gardens in the middle of the city February 28 to press their demands for control over the two and a half acres of public park land. The area has been turned into a *marae* (meeting place) and renamed Pakaitore, the Maori name for the site last century.

All through the day of the threatened eviction, supporters were welcomed onto the *marae*. By the time the 5:00 p.m. deadline approached, more than 1,500 people, Maori and non-Maori, jammed the site. Supporters organized by local church groups formed a human chain around the perimeter of the Gardens. The deadline passed to the celebratory sounds of singing and dancing as it became apparent that the council was not going to send in the police to enforce the eviction notice.

The district council, which had been in an emergency meeting, announced that it would refer the question of ownership of the land to the High Court for a ruling.

Earlier in the day, 300 occupiers and supporters marched up Wanganui's main street. A spirited *haka* (war dance) was performed outside the bookstore owned by Mayor Chas Poynter. The big-business media claims the land occupation has split the city's 37,000 population into two hostile camps, Maori and *Pakeha* (whites), but there was little evidence of this on the march. A frequent chant that went up was "Pakaitore is Maori land, Pakeha give us a hand." This reporter heard a Maori woman explain to a young non-Maori supporter that this fight was not "people against people, but people against the system."

Another theme promoted by police and echoed in the media is the supposed presence on the occupation site of "criminals" and gang members who are bent on provoking violent confrontation. Most media coverage of the March 30 events prominently featured the arrest of a protester who broke the window of a car that drove through a road block set up at the entrance to the *marae*. But leaders of the land occupation say the provocation came from the car's driver, and have laid a complaint of dangerous driving against him.

Farewelling supporters late in the evening of March 30, spokesperson for the occupation Niko Tangaroa said they had been overwhelmed by the level of support received from all over the country. "It's



Demonstration for Maori land rights in Helensville, New Zealand, in February 1994.

been a wonderful, magical day."

Fellow leader Ken Mair added that "this victory today marks the beginning of a new fight for our *tino rangatiratanga* (sovereignty)."

Hundreds of police from other districts were mobilized to Wanganui March 30. On April 2, more than 50 protesters from the land occupation marched on the Wanganui police station to demand a halt to ongoing police harassment and racist abuse.

The National Party government's growing crisis over Maori land rights deepened the morning of the March 30 eviction threat as news headlines revealed that the party's senior whip in Parliament, John Carter, had made hoax calls to radio talk shows. Carter, using a fake accent, had

posed as an unemployed Maori worker making derogatory comments that echoed racist stereotypes.

One of the calls was to a show hosted by Minister of Police John Banks, a fellow National Party member of Parliament whose radio program promotes rightist themes against Maoris, women, gays, and welfare recipients.

Carter was forced to resign as the government's chief whip April 4 as his radio remarks were met by widespread outrage.

Since the Maori land occupation began in Wanganui February 28, supporters of land rights have started smaller occupations in Kaitia and Rotorua.

Terry Coggan is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Auckland.